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ABSTRACT

In the late 1980s, state and district policymakers turned their attention from the number of academic courses to the quality of the core academic content being taught in public schools. This report focuses on the development and progress of standards-based reform in 9 states and 25 districts during 1994 and 1995. The states included California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Texas. The following 12 points highlight the major findings: (1) In 1994-95, versions of standards-based, systemic change remained a key feature in all 9 states' education policies; (2) discussion of state-level education policy was not as partisan as might be expected; (3) when standards development was slowed, it was often due to difficulties in achieving professional and/or public consensus over the nature and design of particular standards; (4) the nature of the standards altered considerably since the reforms first began; (5) state policymakers defined their standards broadly, while district administrators and teachers often wanted more guidance and support; (6) many districts attempted to match or exceed state initiatives in instructional guidance; (7) state governments were the only source of ideas for standards-based reform at the local level; (8) the expanded array of actors raises concern about the coherence of the messages that local officials receive about good practice; (9) policymakers have begun to address questions about organizational capacity, although their steps have been incremental; (10) states' efforts to address equity were, in general, fragmented or loosely connected to standards reforms; (11) state increases in revenues only kept pace with inflation at a time when local educational responsibilities and costs were growing; and (12) lack of public support and understanding of standards-based reform remained major obstacles to the stability of standards. Seven tables are included. (Contains 74 references.) (LMI)

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Persistence and Change: Standards-based Reform in Nine States

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Pennsylvania

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Biographies

Diane Massell is a Senior Research Associate at the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, located in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. In the last few years, her work has focused on the evolution of standards-based reform, and the development of national, state and local standards policies, resulting in such publications as *Setting National Content Standards*, a special issue of *Education and Urban Society*. More recently, her work has focused on the efforts of a national consortium, the New Standards initiative, to create alternative ways of student assessment, and on a new study of the impacts of policy on local practice in 8 states.

Michael Kirst has been Professor of Education and Business Administration at Stanford University since 1969. Kirst has authored ten books, including *Schools in Conflict: Political Turbulence in American Education* (with Frederick Wirt, 1992), *Federal Aid to Education*, and his trade book *Who Controls Our Schools* (W.H. Freeman, 1984). As a policy generalist, Kirst has published articles on school finance politics, curriculum politics, intergovernmental relations, as well as education reform policies. Kirst is Co-Director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), a California state education policy research group.

Margaret Hoppe is a consultant to CPRE. She has provided support on several CPRE projects including the evaluation of the Merck Institute initiative to reform science in four districts and an analysis of the linkages between state and urban initiatives in science and mathematics.

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Overview

This report focuses on the development and progress of standards-based reform in 9 states and 25 districts during 1994 and 1995. It is called "Persistence and Change" because it tells of the continued momentum of standards-based reform. The reform persisted at the same time that political challenges, lack of public understanding and the sheer burden of the work involved occasioned delays, revisions, and modification. We begin this report with an introduction focusing on state education policy, a discussion of our previous work on state reform, and a summary of our current major findings.

Introduction

Although public education is a constitutional responsibility of state government, state policymakers historically delegated this authority to local school districts, particularly in matters of curriculum and instruction. District policymakers, in turn, usually entrusted the curriculum to teachers or textbook publishers, and hired few district staff to develop or provide instructional guidance (Walker, 1990; Rowan, 1983; Crowson and Morris, 1985). Typically, when state or district policymakers did provide direction, they limited it to bare listings of course requirements or behavioral objectives. Few systems prescribed topics within courses or curricula; guidelines about teaching pedagogy were even rarer (Cohen and Spillane, 1993).

In marked contrast to this long historical pattern, states and districts have made unprecedented forays into curriculum and instruction during the last twenty years. Even within this short period, however, their policy approaches have changed rapidly, shifting both in terms of student learning objectives and the kinds of strategies they used to encourage local instructional innovation. Whereas in the late 1970s, state policymakers instituted minimum competency tests to ensure that students learned a modicum of basic skills, by the early 1980s they began to expand both the subjects and grade levels tested. They also pushed through increases in credit requirements for core academic subjects as prerequisites for graduation.

In the late-1980s, state and district policymakers (along with many professional subject-matter associations and private foundations) turned their attention from the number of academic courses to the *quality* of the core academic content being taught in public schools. They undertook this effort primarily in response to international test results and domestic studies, which indicated that even our academic courses were relatively weak and offered students little opportunity to apply knowledge (Porter et al., 1993; Elley, 1992; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1992; Kirst, 1993; National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). Proponents of more rigorous instructional guidance strategies called for three key reforms:

(1) establishing challenging academic standards for what all students should know and be able to do;

(2) aligning policies—such as testing, teacher certification, and professional development—and accountability programs to standards; and

(3) restructuring the governance system to delegate overtly to schools and districts the responsibility for developing specific instructional approaches that meet the broadly-worded standards for which the state holds them accountable (Smith and O'Day, 1991).

Known as *standards-based systemic reform*, the overarching objectives of this policy approach are to foster student mastery of more rigorous, challenging academic content and to increase the emphasis on its application. Business and industry executives, as well as many educators and researchers, have espoused these broad goals.

CPRE's Studies of Reform

Since 1985, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) has been studying the design and architecture of state and district school reform. By conducting longitudinal case studies first in six states (from 1985-90), and then in nine (1990-95), we sought to document the evolution and broad impact of public education policy. During the past five years, we explored the policy reform initiatives—primarily focusing on standards-based reforms—in California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Texas. We developed district case studies through a regular cycle of field visits and telephone interviews, as well as the collection and review of pertinent documents[1], in 25 districts within these states. At each level, we spoke with between 12 and 20 policymakers, political observers, and interest-group representatives, as well as school administrators and teachers (see Appendix 1).

In earlier reports on the nine states, we described and analyzed the many variations in state approaches to standards-based reform. (Fuhrman and Massell, 1992; Massell and Fuhrman, 1994; Fuhrman, 1994b). Differences from state to state reflected the interaction of policy ideas with each state's political traditions and structure; its leadership, economic climate, political issues, and interest groups; and the activities of national and other non-governmental groups in the state, among other issues. These elements interact to make an approach to change acceptable in one setting and heretical in another.

Our earlier reports on this project also identified several persistent issues, reforms, and challenges that state and district policymakers were confronting as they tried to implement

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[1] When we first began our work, 30 districts planned to participate. For a variety of reasons, ranging from political turbulence in district environments to research saturation and overload, five of our districts withdrew from the study. Over this period, we conducted a total of three site visits at the state level (in 1990-91, 1991-92, and 1994-95) and two at the local level (in 1993-94 and 1994-95).

reforms. Among them were questions about how to develop appropriate and useful standards, curriculum frameworks, and assessments for schools and districts; connect these reforms to teacher education and professional development; build public and professional support for reform; integrate top-down standards with bottom-up restructuring; create schools with the capacity needed to help students achieve ambitious outcomes; and promote more equitable opportunities for learning (Fuhrman and Massell, 1992; Massell and Fuhrman, 1994; Fuhrman, 1994b; Massell, 1994a; Hertert, 1996).

Major Findings

In this report, which draws upon the most recent CPRE field research in states and districts, we look at how these issues have been addressed and explore new issues that have emerged or are on the horizon. The following 12 points highlight our major findings.

(1) **In 1994-95, versions of standards-based, systemic change remained a key feature in all our states' education policies, and an integral part of at least eight states' future plans. Twenty of our 25 districts have been using standards-based reforms as elements of their strategies for improving curriculum and instruction.** At the same time, we witnessed an acceleration of policy talk about market-based reforms such as charters, school choice, and vouchers, and sustained attention to deregulation and decentralization. Charter school laws were expanded or introduced, some extraordinary decentralization measures were passed, and several states downsized their central state and local educational agencies. Yet, despite the growing prominence of market-based reform at the state level and increased criticism of state and federal roles in standards initiatives like Goals 2000, the elaboration and implementation of standards-based instructional guidance policies moved steadily forward.

(2) **Discussion in 1994-95 of state-level education policy or the broad framework of standards-based reform was not as partisan as might be expected given political turnover in the states.** Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that education was not regarded as a top policy priority in most states in 1994-95. Partisanship did emerge over intergovernmental authority issues, such as the dispute over whether the federal Goals 2000 law infringed on state autonomy. However, many state and local respondents also suggested that the Goals 2000 law was so flexible that it provided almost no constraints on their own reform designs. State policymakers often asked for and received waivers from procedural requirements.

(3) Since the beginning of these reform efforts, the pace of standards development has been rather variable. Each state experienced periods of rapid or slow progress depending upon the policy environment at the time and the particular subject-matter area under consideration. In some of our states, efforts to create standards and other instructional guidance documents had been underway for more than five years. Others had completed the work in roughly three years. **When standards development was slowed, it was often due to difficulties in achieving professional and/or public consensus over the nature and design of particular standards, as well as to turnover in leadership and resource constraints. The apparently open-ended**

nature of the development process and the perceived slow pace of change generated frustration and skepticism about the reforms in some states.

(4) **The nature of the standards, as reflected both in the documents delineating what students should know and be able to do and in statewide testing programs, altered considerably since these reform movements first began.** Over the past several years, policymakers who included the kinds of affective goals often associated with an approach known as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) received substantial criticism from religious and conservative groups, but also from the general public and educators. Such goals as 'students should demonstrate high self-esteem' or 'students should work well with others' were challenged as value-laden, intrusive, and difficult to assess. After removing affective goals, policymakers in several states and districts then confronted growing public and professional concerns about the kinds of constructivist practices and new performance-based assessments often touted by reformers as best for teaching problem-solving and critical thinking skills. But these practices and goals came under sharp criticism for de-emphasizing or even rejecting basic skills instruction. **Thus far, however, state and district policymakers have responded by seeking greater *balance* between new and older approaches, rather than calling for a wholesale return to conventional practices.**

(5) **For both political and pedagogical reasons, state policymakers defined their standards broadly, intentionally leaving the operational details of curricula to districts and schools. However, district administrators and teachers often wanted *more* guidance and support than the states offered.** This need became most acute for districts that were held accountable for performing well on high-stakes tests tied to the standards. Local respondents frequently felt that state standards were beneficial because they focused attention on instructional issues, but complained that they were too broad and general.

(6) Concerns expressed by some conservative interest groups that standards-based reform represented intrusive governmental interference in local instructional matters did not seem to be widely shared by local respondents. In fact, our finding from the first five years of CPRE research (1985-90) that an expanded state role in education stimulated more, not less, policy at local levels (Fuhrman and Elmore, 1990) is replicated in the case of standards-based reform. **Many districts attempted to match or exceed state initiatives in instructional guidance**, and high-capacity districts continued to be strong sources for state policy design. But state policy activities also stimulated and focused local initiatives. **More than half of the districts located in states with standards in place reported that the standards initiatives had influenced their own instructional guidance efforts.**

(7) **However, state governments were not the only—and sometimes not even the most important—source of ideas for standards-based reform at the local level.** Non-governmental and other governmental efforts contributed to the momentum for change by providing alternative sources of ideas and helped to build capacity at the local level. For example, teacher, school, and district networks were created by such national projects as the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Project 2061 and the New American Schools Development Corporation. National standards documents developed by subject-matter

associations supported and influenced the development of state standards documents. Participation in projects such as the National Science Foundation's various State, Urban, and Rural Systemic Initiatives expanded the capacity and reach of state standards-based reforms, sometimes acting to maintain momentum and support for reform goals. **Together, these projects and initiatives brought isolated groups into the dialogue of broader reform communities.**

(8) Thus, in 1994-95 we perceived many more voices supporting standards-based instructional change than we did in the mid-to-late 1980s. While one motivation for systemic reform was to reduce the fragmentation in education and clarify the mixed signals being sent to teachers and schools, **this expanded array of actors, each with its own variant of standards-based reform and with its own resources and influences, raises anew our earliest questions about the coherence of the messages local officials receive about good practice.** While some of their activities reinforced common curricular and instructional themes, there were also considerable differences among the projects. Highly entrepreneurial districts that solicited and won project moneys from different sources received different directives about what to do and how to do it. And, as in the past, state lawmakers continued to layer new policies on old ones, sending mixed and at times incompatible signals to districts and schools (see Fuhrman, 1993).

(9) Earlier studies noted that developing the organizational capacity for districts and schools and the individual capacity for teachers to carry out new, challenging kinds of instruction was the most significant issue confronting reform—but was being given the least attention. **Several years into the reform, policymakers have begun to address these capacity questions and tie licensure and professional development activities to reform, although the numerous steps they have taken are still, at best, incremental.** A few states adopted performance-based teacher certification and licensure programs, with evaluations of teacher performance that were at least philosophically congruent with the new standards. But funding constraints and issues of professional and local autonomy made connections between standards and professional development episodic. Linkages were often procedural (i.e., "use this process to define professional development needs"), rather than specific and substantive. Some notable exceptions were state and other national or university efforts to create teacher or school networks built around substantive reform goals. Also, some states used teachers to develop assessments or standards, activities that also served as professional development.

(10) **While all of our states made some attempt to address equity issues, their efforts for the most part were fragmented or loosely connected, if at all, to standards reforms.** Major initiatives, such as desegregation and finance equity, often preceded curricular and were seldom integrated with curricular reform except when state test results were used to identify inequities. State policymakers were requiring or encouraging more students to be included in their testing programs as a primary way of fulfilling the ideal that all students should be held to high standards. Yet, there were disagreements and concerns about the potential impact of this strategy on special needs students, particularly on schools and districts who have large numbers of such students, and about the best way to realize this goal. Representatives of special needs students or programs were often only marginally involved in the development of standards and

assessments. Finally, the majority of our states had not yet attempted to develop opportunities to learn standards.

(11) **While our states increased revenues for schooling, they only kept pace with inflation at a time when local educational responsibilities and costs were growing**. These funding levels reflect national trends, which show that inflation-adjusted revenue per pupil has remained relatively unchanged since 1991 (Odden et al., 1995). In some cases, larger fiscal burdens on local districts soured the climate for state-led educational reforms, perceived to be unfunded mandates. The twin pressures of state-level tax cuts and devolution in other arenas of government in addition to education were likely to exacerbate these problems for districts. Although state policymakers have tried to address this problem by providing districts with greater flexibility in the use of dollars, several were also requiring cuts in, or reducing funding for, district administrative staff. Thus, local officials were struggling under the combined weight of resource and personnel shortages.

(12) **Lack of public support and understanding of standards-based reforms remained major obstacles to the stability of standards**. While all states and many districts had developed mechanisms for professional and public feedback during the development of their standards, in practice these efforts were of relatively short duration and tended to look more like public information campaigns than attempts to establish ongoing, reciprocal dialogues in the pursuit of mutual understanding and agreement. Broad public and professional input was even less apparent in the development of new assessment programs, in part due to technical needs to keep items secure and prevent cheating. In 1995, a few of our states took strong measures to address this problem and provide greater access and scrutiny. While some districts attempted to mobilize local support for standards-based reform, these were often isolated efforts. Most policymakers were at a loss over how to create real and sustained dialogue with the public and tended to rely heavily on polls for their information about public sentiment. These polls have some important limitations, because opinions expressed about education in general can generate different reactions than those concerning one's own children or community. In short, the nationwide concern about inadequate public engagement is well-founded. To sustain reform, policymakers will need to learn how to better engage the public.

The remainder of this report will expand upon these key issues.

National Policy Trends

Standards-Based Reform

The idea that common and ambitious standards should be developed to provide direction to education has dominated the national education policy conversation throughout the 1990s. National surveys suggest that efforts to establish standards-based systemic change have become an integral feature of states' plans to improve instruction and student learning. A 1995 report by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) listed 49 states as having engaged in some version of standards-based reform (Gandolf, 1995). While the approach to systemic reform varies along substantially across the states, one key, common strategy was to develop new assessments linked to the new standards. The same AFT study finds that 31 states have or plan to develop statewide testing programs coordinated with their content standards (Gandolf, 1995). Many are incorporating forms of performance-based test items into their exams to make them more congruent with their standards' instructional and learning goals. The number of states using performance-based, non-multiple choice exercises in their assessment programs grew from 17 in 1991-92 to 39 in 1994-95 (Bond, et al., 1996). And, many state policymakers are continuing to link teacher licensure and training, accountability programs, and other policies to standards reform, while at the same time devolving responsibilities and authority for the specifics of curriculum and instruction to local districts and schools. States increasingly have been joined by districts striving to put a standards-based system in place. Prominent examples include New York, NY; Chicago, IL; Philadelphia, PA; San Diego, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; Beaumont, TX; and Edmonds, WA. However, the strength of standards-based reform as a policy idea should not imply that these initiatives did not face very serious problems and challenges—they did, as we discuss in later sections of this report. But, it was also true that, overall, this reform idea enjoyed broad stability and incremental progress in 1994-95.

Deregulation, Decentralization and Market-based Reforms

As in other domestic public arenas, a discernible feature of education policy in 1994-95 was the high volume of policy talk and attention given to decentralization and deregulation initiatives, as well as market-based reforms. Policymakers promoted decentralization and deregulation efforts that included transfers of responsibility from federal to state and from state to local authorities, waivers of rules and regulations, regulatory reductions, cutbacks in central education bureaucracies, school-based management and decisionmaking, and other efforts that aim to stimulate local decisionmaking and responsibility. For example, a dozen states considered legislation to abolish state boards of education. Texas cut the state education code by one-third, allowed for "home rule" charters that would release districts from many state regulations, and provided grant entitlements for students to transfer without charge if they attend low-performing public schools or districts. Similarly, deregulation and decentralization was a major, expanded theme in South Carolina, New Jersey, and California, and a continuing part of Minnesota's and

Florida's reform initiatives. Thirty states considered reducing or reorganizing their departments of education (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1995). Many of our states continued a trend begun in the early 1980s of sharply reducing their state education agency staff.[2] In addition, Georgia and New Jersey either cut or set limits allowable expenditures for district central office personnel.

Although there is clear overlap with decentralization and deregulation reforms, market-based reforms go one step further by stimulating competition among schools and putting decisionmaking authority more directly into the hands of parents. Many advocates of this reform strategy propose that the discipline of the market, the spur of competition, and the inducement of more—or less—revenue tied to student enrollments will lead to change and innovation in public education. Specific market-based reforms include policies such as open enrollment laws permitting parents to select any public school for their children; charter schools allowing different agents (parents, teachers, and others) to set up public schools free from some regulation; enrollment options enabling qualified high school students to attend postsecondary institutions; and vouchers allowing public moneys to follow students to any public or private school. Also included in this category are "privatization" measures—districts' use of private firms to handle certain responsibilities or even run entire schools.

Market-based reforms grew significantly in the past few years: by the end of 1994, 11 states had passed charter school legislation, and by 1995 that figure nearly doubled when nine states took similar action (Education Commission of the States, 1995). In our sample, California, Georgia, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Texas had laws permitting charter schools. In 1988, when Minnesota passed its statewide open enrollment program allowing parents to select the public school of their choice, it was the first one to do so; by 1995, 16 states had passed similar legislation (Center for Education Reform, 1995). Voucher initiatives were introduced in several states in 1994-95, including Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, and Pennsylvania, but none of these states was successful in joining the limited voucher programs already underway in Wisconsin and Ohio. Although these bills were less successful in transforming policy talk into action, they were often defeated by slim margins. They were reintroduced in Minnesota and are likely to reappear in other states. In addition, a number of districts—including Baltimore, Hartford, and Miami, among others—undertook privatization initiatives that involved private companies taking over entire schools.

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[2] In both the 1980s and 1990s, we found reductions-in-force of approximately 25 percent in the states we tracked. Then, as now, the arguments for these reductions arose out of mistrust and the perception that these agencies were self-interested bureaucracies representing the "education establishment" rather than students, parents, or the public. In Georgia, for example, the state department lost 89 of 450 positions in 1992 (Massell and Fuhrman, 1994). Minnesota abolished its department of education and merged education functions into a new Department of Children, Families, and Learning created by the governor. The long-term impact of these changes and cuts on state leadership could be profound, particularly if federal resources are cut and if the federal government devolves more responsibilities to the states.

Many state and local policy initiatives for standards-based reform have included decentralization, deregulation, and market-based policies in their overall plans. However, attention to these components accelerated, in part because a Republican majority came to power in Congress and in many states after the 1994 elections. These initiatives have great appeal for many Republicans, who promote smaller government and a more unregulated economy. But decentralization, deregulation, and market-based reforms also have been attractive to many Democrats, increasing support for these reforms even further. Advocacy does not fall neatly along party lines.

The Politics of Reform

Political Stability for Standards-based Reform in a Climate of Change

In the nine states studied by CPRE, 1994-95 was characterized by a disjuncture between change-oriented political rhetoric and a steady, incremental focus on the kinds of state instructional guidance policies that have evolved over the past five to ten years. At the federal level, new Congressional majorities strongly challenged the 1994 Goals 2000 law that promotes standards-based reform. These majorities particularly targeted elements that seemed to infringe on state authority, like national certification of state standards. They did not challenge the standards framework of the Improving America's Schools Act (the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act), although they asked—ultimately unsuccessfully—for deep cuts to the long-running federal programs funded under this act. These groups and others led criticisms against the substance of initiatives like the national history standards, and renewed an older proposal that called for the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education.

The rhetoric that urged smaller government, deregulation, decategorization, and greater free-market choice at the federal level was mirrored by similar discussions at the state level. Again, while political leaders in states such as California and Texas directed attacks on Goals 2000, their concerns were primarily over intergovernmental authority and control issues, not the framework of standards-based reform. Even when strong antigovernment sentiment did question the idea of state standards or the federal role in education, actual policy changes were modest, and our states, for the most part, stayed the course with standards-based reform.

In fact, standards-based reforms persisted despite a high rate of turnover in political leadership. New Jersey's chief changed in 1994, and in 1995 new chief state school officers took the helm in Florida, Minnesota, Kentucky, Connecticut, Georgia, Texas, and California. Only Barbara Nielsen in South Carolina maintained her seat. In addition, there was considerable turnover in party control in the nine states (see Table 1). In 1993-94, Republicans captured the governorships of Texas, Connecticut, and New Jersey from the Democrats, as well as one house of the legislature in South Carolina and Connecticut. In California, the Assembly was evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, and had a Republican Speaker. While Minnesota Democrats maintained control of the House, there was an increase in new Republicans who were distinctly more socially conservative and constituted a voting majority on some issues. The chief state school officers in Florida and Georgia were Republican, and Republican governors selected new chiefs in New Jersey, Minnesota, and Texas.

Table 1
Political Profile of the Sample States, Post-1994 Elections

STATE	SENATE	HOUSE	GOVERNOR
California	D (6)*	Even split, plus 1 independent	R
Connecticut	R (2)	D (29)	R
Florida	R (2)	D (6)	D
Georgia	D (15)	D (50)	D
Kentucky	D (4)	D (28)	D
Minnesota	D (22)	D (8)	R
New Jersey	R (8)	R (24)	R
South Carolina	D (12)	R (8)	R
Texas	D (3)	D (22)	R

Source: Adapted from the *National Conference of State Legislatures* (1995)

* Figures in parentheses are the number of seats by which the party maintains a majority. These numbers include independents and others, but not vacancies.

Standards reforms did not become the primary focus of campaign rhetoric in most races for elected chief state school officers. In several of our states, particularly Georgia and Texas, new leaders' agendas focused instead on reducing state control over local education through deregulation and decentralization, and market-based initiatives. In addition, in 1994-95, education reform was of relatively low saliency in state electoral races, and took a back seat to new leaders' more immediate concerns over health care, taxes, and crime. Only in Kentucky was education at or near the top of the agenda in gubernatorial races, with criticisms over the state assessment program and other aspects of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) in the foreground of debate. The Republican candidate's platform called KERA a failure, but the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, who supported maintaining KERA with some modest modifications, won. Consequently, Kentucky reforms will likely undergo incremental mid-course corrections, but not be completely overhauled.

Why, despite party shifts and the preponderance of policy talk about other reforms, was standards-based reform able to maintain substantial political momentum? Certainly, the support of various state interest groups contributed to the stability of standards reforms. Large business organizations, like the Business Roundtable, remained major backers, even though in some states they played a quieter, behind-the-scenes role when public criticism arose. For example, in several states they focused their attention on trying to understand grassroots sentiment. Also,

education groups including teacher unions continued to back state standards reforms. In Texas, for example, business administrators, school administrators, and other education groups lobbied to keep the state test-based accountability system in place, even in a climate of strong legislative support for deregulation and decentralization that could have provided freedom from such mandates. California teachers supported a successful attempt to initiate authorization of a new state assessment system, and Minnesota teachers were supportive of the general idea of increased graduation standards. On the other hand, teacher unions strongly resisted such market-based initiatives as vouchers and opposed any attempt to repeal past gains in such areas as tenure and scope of bargaining. For instance, in Connecticut teachers fought efforts to change state tenure laws, and New Jersey teachers lobbied against changes in state certification laws. Finally, the reach of national initiatives, such as those sponsored by the National Science Foundation, had a stabilizing influence on standards reforms being designed and implemented in the states. Middle-level administrators at the state level were involved in these projects and continued to support and promote them. The continuation of administrative cuts in the state agencies, however, may affect the infrastructure for reform in the future.

In our states, as elsewhere, we found small but well-organized opposition to standards-based reforms from traditional Christian and conservative groups. These were not the only groups criticizing or opposing standards-based reform, but they were one of the most vocal and influential. In general, these groups opposed federal or state control over education and supported deregulation, choice, charter schools, and local flexibility. They opposed state acceptance of federal Goals 2000 grants as an example of expanded governmental authority. They also rallied against OBE, standards, and performance-based assessment, often perceiving them to be both an extension of government influence and vehicles for liberal philosophies. Over the last few years their influence expanded substantially at the state level in Kentucky and Minnesota. They were active in each of the CPRE study states except New Jersey, and were most influential in Georgia and South Carolina. But, while traditional Christian and conservative groups exerted a growing influence within the Republican party at the state level, their fear of federal control and opposition to OBE did not necessarily lead to partisan battles about the basic idea of standards. And, at the local level, these groups rarely exerted a dominant presence.

While standards-based reform remained on the agenda, no one in the nine states advocated a major *expansion* of state instructional guidance policies or state authority in this sphere. California restored an assessment program after vetoing an earlier one in 1994, and Kentucky implemented a prior policy decision to provide fiscal rewards to local education agencies that made significant gains in student achievement. To pass the new California assessment, a coalition of the Republican Governor, Democratic chief state school officer, and the Democratic Senate had to overcome opposition in the Republican-led lower house. Measures that stripped the state department of education of some of its authority and responsibility for assessment were critical to successful passage. In their stead, the bill created a new external performance standards group, with a majority of the members appointed by the Governor.

Public Support for Reform

Lack of public support and understanding of standards-based reforms remained a major political obstacle. Only Kentucky and South Carolina had well-developed plans for mobilizing public awareness and a grassroots political support network. The other states mounted public information efforts, but they often relied on building support among professional educator groups. Meetings with professional educators about standards reforms were widespread in all nine states, but policymakers relied on professional elites to support reform and to deliver information to the general public. Some members of the public had been briefed on, or included in, state curricular framework formulation, but plans for building deeper public understanding and support were rare. Some district education agencies mobilized local support for standards reform, but their strategies were not linked effectively to an explicit state strategy—and the public, for the most part, was not demanding reform. In short, the nationwide concern about inadequate public engagement is well-founded.

More will have to be done if state reforms are to engender the necessary public support. Yet, many policymakers are uncertain about *how* to inform people of the changes, much less build the kind of interactive, sustained dialogue and understanding believed to be necessary. For example, despite strong and sustained efforts to inform the public about Kentucky reforms, a 1994 poll showed that nearly half the respondents had not heard about them (Kentucky Institute for Educational Research, 1994). In Minnesota, although a well-funded public campaign to clarify the state's efforts on the Graduation Rule was successful in reducing the perception that it was the same thing as OBE, the public appeared to know very little about the specifics of the Graduation Rule itself. On the other hand, Florida's school improvement councils, which include non-parental public representatives, seemed to have raised public awareness about what schools do and how they are run because smaller media markets have covered them. The school provided a tangible and logical unit upon which to focus.

In sum, the politics of standards-based reform during late 1994 and 1995 remained generally favorable overall and allowed for a surprisingly high level of stability. Nevertheless, a skeptical and uncertain public and a weak education bureaucracy may yet affect the course of these reforms.

The Evolution and Status of Content Standards

In 1994-95, all of the nine states in our study—California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Texas—continued to develop or revise their academic content standards (see Table 2), as did many districts in these states.[3] As noted in the previous section, the education and business communities remained supportive of standards-based reform. External stimulus for reform also came from national associations and projects and other levels of government. Despite this assistance, developing and revising standards was not a smooth or easy process, but instead was characterized by repeated delays and decisions to start anew.

The Pace and Progress of Standards Development

Establishing standards has proceeded at a variable and slower-than-expected pace over the life of these initiatives. In most of the states, development was deferred in some or all discipline areas. For example, standards documents in Minnesota and New Jersey were in process for over five years. While New Jersey's State Board of Education finally adopted new standards, Minnesota was still in the process of development. Although Florida's more general standards were adopted several years ago, matching curriculum frameworks were only adopted recently. New curriculum frameworks were authorized in South Carolina in 1990, but work on five of their eight frameworks was postponed.

Delays occurred for many different reasons. In South Carolina and Connecticut, budget constraints contributed to deferrals. Turnovers in political or administrative leadership in states such as Connecticut, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Texas created turbulence in the process. Certainly, political mobilization against Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) or against the inclusion or absence of particular goals, such as basic skills and traditional pedagogical approaches, led policymakers in the majority of states (CA, CT, KY, GA, MN, SC, and TX) back to the drawing board. In addition, Connecticut and South Carolina experienced difficulties in achieving professional consensus in particular subject matter areas. For example, South Carolina encountered significant challenges in building bridges across professional divisions in their English language arts and science communities, but not in mathematics, foreign languages, or visual performing arts. Minnesota, on the other hand, had difficulty securing acceptance of the broad vision and conceptual organization of their standards. It began with an OBE approach, which was eventually discarded, and then devised a two-tiered approach to standards, one focused on basic skills, and the other on more challenging thinking skills.

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[3] We use the term "content standards" to refer to the collective body of documents that policymakers use to guide curriculum (see the next section). Some states do not use this term. For example, Texas calls them essential skills. We have taken the liberty, for the sake of simplicity, of referring to these documents generically as standards.

When leaders in states such as California, New Jersey, and Minnesota determined that the quality of draft documents was poor or that additional time was needed to win support for the initiative, they intentionally extended the period of development and review. Also, the sheer magnitude and complexity of a broad review and feedback process was time-consuming. States used iterative processes that involved several stages of agenda setting, development and review intended to encourage professional and public participation. These processes are necessary to assure input and build support, but they are very time-consuming and difficult to manage. (Massell, 1994a). In many states, administrators were struggling with sharply reduced staffing levels at the department of education. In addition, administrators were trying to learn how to accomplish new tasks often within organizational structures that impeded them (see Lusi, 1994).

While time might have improved the quality of standards, the slow pace generated political opposition (in states such as Georgia, Florida, and Minnesota) or skepticism that standards would ever be meaningfully implemented (New Jersey and Minnesota). Said one Georgia official, "People have wanted change, and they haven't seen it coming fast enough. The only barometer is what they see and hear in the press, 90 percent of which is negative." Even when the development process was not especially slow, it could have been perceived as such by politicians who, under the pressure of reelection campaigns, tended to demand speedy results (Fuhrman, 1993).

Yet, despite some of these impeding factors, it was also true that standards initiatives continued with a momentum that extended beyond state policy activity. As noted earlier, there has been a tremendous amount of external, non-governmental activity nurturing standards reform. People in all of our states reported drawing upon the resources and efforts of associations like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as well as other national initiatives such as the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), which developed employment-related skills standards. State policymakers reported that Goals 2000 provided fiscal support for their ongoing reform agenda. Mathematics and science standards were being developed and supported by the National Science Foundation's Statewide Systemic Initiative in seven of our states (CA, CT, FL, GA, KY, NJ, and TX). Even in states like Georgia, where revisions in most areas had been stalled for years, efforts in science and mathematics forged ahead independently. However, as other research on school reform has demonstrated, the institutionalization and broader use of the standards will ultimately require some level of active state or districtwide support (see Fullan, 1991; McLaughlin, 1991; Massell and Goertz, 1994).

Table 2
Evolution of Curriculum Standards Documents in the 9 States

CA	•	In the mid-80s, state leaders focused on turning pre-existing state curriculum frameworks into more challenging, innovative documents. Revised frameworks in five subject areas were phased in over the next several years, and by 1994-95 were well-established. But that year the frameworks came under increasing scrutiny because of the state's poor performance on the mathematics and reading portions of the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, among other things. In 1995 the department established task forces to revisit the frameworks.
	•	A 1995 law, Assembly Bill 265, required the development of a new approach to guidance. It called for content and performance standards at every grade level, rather than just grade-level clusters as their current frameworks do. These standards will be developed by a new commission, using a different review process. Plans are to submit the standards for adoption by the state board of education by January, 1998.
CT	•	In 1987, the state adopted the Common Core of Learning, which is a set of voluntary, general skills and outcomes for K-12 schooling. Connecticut has produced voluntary guides for curriculum development since 1981.
	•	In 1994, a major report called for the development of content and performance standards, but the mandatory nature of this recommendation generated significant opposition and legislation failed. Currently, the SDE is revising its voluntary guides, which are scheduled for release in 1997.
FL	•	The 1991 School Improvement and Education Accountability Act called for the revision of the state's pre-existing curriculum frameworks, following the development of more general state goals and standards in 1993.
	•	In 1996, after some delays, the state adopted frameworks in seven content areas.
GA	•	In 1988, Georgia adopted the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC), laying out 72 basic competencies needed for graduation from high school. While law required periodic revisions, these were frequently delayed. However, in 1992 English language arts standards were updated and adopted, as were science and mathematics standards in 1995-96.
	•	Efforts to revise the QCC continued in 1996, and new standards are scheduled for publication in 1997.
KY	•	In 1990, the Kentucky Education Reform Act authorized the development of measurable state learning outcomes, and set the state on its course of developing 3 major curriculum guidance documents. Its "57 Academic Expectations" identifies broadly what students should know and be able to do. It is a pared down version of an earlier document containing the kinds of affective[4] goals that critics felt intruded into personal values.

[4] Affective goals can include such items as students shall learn to respect themselves and others, or work well in groups. They are often associated with Outcomes-Based Education approaches.

Table 2 (Cont.)
Evolution of Curriculum Standards Documents in the 9 States

KY	•	"57 Academic Expectations" became the foundation for a second guidance document, the *Transformations* curriculum framework. However, in part because of KERA's high stakes accountability system, local educators felt that *Transformations* did not provide sufficient clarity and guidance. As a result, in 1996 the SDE published the third piece, more specific guidelines known as Core Content for Assessment.
MN	•	Minnesota began its move towards a more results-oriented system in the 1980s. The structure and format of its standards altered many times, beginning at first with Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and over times bringing in other standards elements. Opposition mounted to the more affective goals of OBE as well as its high degree of prescriptiveness concerning local instructional practices. By 1993 this piece of the reform agenda was abandoned.
	•	The Graduation Rule is the current state standards initiative, and contains 2 components: 1) the Basic Requirements, which are minimum skills required of all students for high school graduation, and 2) the Profile of Learning, which are more challenging standards. Students must demonstrate achievement on a portion of the 64 Profile of Learning standards.
NJ	•	New Jersey began the process of developing standards in the late 1980s, but changes in state reform strategies as well as leadership prolonged the process. The current approach was established in a 1991 monitoring law requiring K-12 content standards. While drafts were completed two years later, an election with turnovers in the governor's and commissioner's office led to postponements and more revisions.
	•	Finally, in 1996 the state board of education adopted content standards in eight areas, and they have become the centerpiece of the governor's response to the state's long-running school finance suit.
SC	•	In 1990 the SDE launched an effort to create curriculum frameworks. Math, visual and performing arts, and foreign languages were approved first, in 1993, since consensus for these subjects had been built on a variety of long-term national and local projects. Controversies, as well as resource constraints, led to delays in other subjects, but by 1996, English-language arts and science were adopted, and the last 3 frameworks (social studies, physical education, health and safety) are scheduled for completion in 1997.
TX	•	In 1984, Texas adopted a set of "essential elements" representing 12 core areas of knowledge that must be included in instruction. They also developed curriculum frameworks to support instruction based on those elements.
	•	The law authorizing the "essential elements" called for a regular cycle of revision, a process begun over the last few years by curriculum clarification committees. While turnovers in state leadership led to a pause in the process, efforts to draft new standards are back on track and are scheduled for completion in 1997.

Substantive Changes in the Standards

From the outset, the standards documents of all nine states varied in their description of what all students should know and be able to do. Elsewhere, CPRE and other researchers have analyzed the major points of variation in the standards (Fuhrman and Massell, 1992; Goertz and Friedman, 1996; Gandolf, 1996). One general difference is found in the simple assortment and types of documents linked together under the rubric of "standards." For example, Kentucky has several sets of documents, both general and specific, that provide guidance, while others like Connecticut have only curriculum guidelines that undergird subject areas in their testing program. Other differences in approaches to standards include the following.

- **Knowledge framework**. While most of the standards documents make some reference to subject-area knowledge, interdisciplinary goals, and generic academic or job-related skills (for example, 'students should be able to communicate well'), the extent to which they emphasize one or another of these three approaches to content knowledge varies greatly. For instance, Florida's new standards strongly emphasized job-related skills. Minnesota's Profile of Learning standards were not tied to subjects. California and South Carolina, on the other hand, focused heavily on disciplines.

- **Level of knowledge and skills**. Although most standards included both basic skills and elemental knowledge as well as rigorous academic content and problem-solving skills, some emphasized one set more heavily than the other. For example, Georgia's standards primarily focused on basic skills, while California's frameworks stressed challenging disciplinary knowledge and critical-thinking (although recently they have taken steps to balance the two). As we shall see, an effort to more explicitly discuss and emphasize traditional basic skill elements in the standards has been growing, but not to the exclusion of problem-solving or more challenging content.

- **Specificity**. The level and type of detail about what students should know and be able to do varies enormously. States like Kentucky have several standards-related documents, with the first one outlining broad goals. Subsequent documents provide greater levels of detail and specificity. The level of detail depends in part on the document's purpose—whether to guide curriculum writers, to support teachers, or to provide information about general goals to the public and policymakers. For example, California has prepared many supplementary documents to support and clarify its frameworks. Several years ago, the state developed three documents—"It's Elementary," "Caught in the Middle," and "Second to None"—that illustrated the implementation of the standards in school settings. Some states identified academic expectations by grade levels or grade spans (California, Texas, and Kentucky), while other states more generally described the outcomes for the K-12 system as a whole (South Carolina). Determining the appropriate level of detail for the standards has been one of the most sensitive decisions facing states. The conundrum is that if standards are too specific and detailed, critics charge the state with trying to exert undue influence over local schooling. On the other hand, if they are too general, they

provide little guidance to teachers and administrators or others who may be trying to link pertinent policies to the standards (see Massell, 1994b).

- **Making connections among content, teaching, and descriptions of student performance**. Another variation in the level of detail is the extent to which policymakers incorporate notions about appropriate teaching strategies and student performance. Within the profession, debates rage over whether content can in fact be divorced from notions of good instruction (see Massell, 1994a and 1994b), but many would agree that performance standards, which describe at some detail what should be expected of student work, offer a critical link between standards theory and classroom practice.

As we followed these nine states over this five-year period, we found that they made several significant alterations to their standards documents. The most significant changes occurred in the substance and level of the standards, but policymakers also struggled with other design issues that raised questions about how to foster effective change in practice.

Early challenges from parents, religious conservatives, and educator groups led several of our study states (and others) to eliminate the kinds of affective goals often associated with OBE reform approaches. Critics of OBE argued that goals such as "students should work well in groups," "have high self-esteem," or "be tolerant of others" were difficult, if not impossible, to measure. They argued that such goals inappropriately intruded into the personal lives and values of students and their families. In 1993, Kentucky responded to these concerns by reducing its "75 Valued Learner Outcomes," which included these kinds of goals, to "57 Academic Expectations," which were based on a more tightly construed notion of academic knowledge. In Minnesota, the changes were more dramatic. OBE, once a cornerstone of its reform initiative, was expected to become a mandated requirement. After much criticism and confusion, OBE became a voluntary initiative but retained substantial state backing in the form of additional resources for the districts undertaking it. When criticism continued, the state completely abandoned this piece of its standards agenda.

By the end of 1995, states like California and Kentucky, which had adopted far-reaching constructivist approaches to academic content knowledge, moved closer to the middle of the change spectrum. Policymakers sought to balance more explicitly the constructivist visions of teaching and learning with a mix of more conventional pedagogies and basic skills. For example, California, whose frameworks in English/language arts and mathematics were tightly wedded to new approaches, set up task forces to review these documents after the state fell to 39th place in reading in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Some of the frameworks' chief designers frankly acknowledged that these documents had underplayed the role of phonics,

math facts, calculation skills, and other basic skills.[5] The task force reports called for maintaining the new approaches but incorporating more traditional learning strategies and reemphasizing basic skills and teaching approaches.

Another impetus for policymakers' reconsideration of strict constructivist approaches in Kentucky, California, and elsewhere was the growing recognition that teachers must be very well-prepared to use these new, more demanding styles of teaching and learning. Among other things, in order to work well these strategies require that teachers have a solid grounding in their subject-matter knowledge, be tolerant of ambiguity, be masterful at directing open-ended discussions, and be attentive to the unique learning needs of a diverse array of students. Furthermore, education research provides more information about where and why traditional techniques fail than about how new ones succeed. In the field of mathematics, for example, reformers have actively promoted the use of blocks, sticks, or other concrete materials to enable students to "see and touch" numbers and to add, subtract, and build fractions in a hands-on way. But understanding does not come automatically through the fingertips, and the relative effects of different kinds of teaching techniques need to be explored further (Ball, 1992). In the press to embrace the new techniques, many came to believe that too often, to use an old expression, the 'baby was thrown out with the bath water.' For example, some advocates of stricter versions of constructivism encouraged teachers to dispense with the use of textbooks, arguing that most provide dull, superficial information, and emphasize facts at the expense of deep knowledge, exploration, and understanding. But frequently, many teachers' disciplinary knowledge is weak; as a result, for example, teachers often do not know enough about the underlying scientific concepts to use hands-on, science kit experiments very effectively. In these cases, students do not receive any systematic explanation of or understanding of science.

On the other hand, states that had maintained a strictly basic-skills approach to standards were not faring any better than those who faced criticism for developing standards that were considered too innovative. Georgia's basic-skill oriented Quality Core Curriculum was perceived to be old and outdated; for this and other reasons, it was in danger of being eliminated. In South Carolina, one-quarter of the districts were no longer required to take the state basic-skills test because they performed well on the exam. This formally placed them outside the accountability system, though some districts continued to administer the test to maintain continuous data on student performance. But respondents saw the basic-skills goals as undemanding and ill-suited to the goal of challenging content. Similarly, many in Minnesota have been critical of the state's decision to require only the basic-skills component of its Graduation Rule, allowing all students to show a record of progress on only a portion of the more

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[5] Bill Honig, former superintendent of public instruction, wrote that the 1987 English/language arts framework created under his watch "makes important points about the need for literacy-rich classrooms, an integrated language arts program, the necessity of being well-read, the potency of literature, and the ability to understand and discuss ideas. While it does state that phonics and skills are important, it is neither specific enough nor clear enough about the essential beginning-to-read strategies for pre-school, kindergarten, and early primary grades. Consequently, as most people now realize, the framework must be supplemented in these areas." He also warned against allowing the pendulum to swing too far back to focus solely on phonics or basic skills (Honig, 1995).

demanding Profile of Learning at their own discretion. State policymakers split the basic-skills component off from the high standards piece partly due to concerns about lawsuits and potential declines in the graduation rate. The resulting compromise was a political and practical one. Said one respondent, "We don't want to be caught up in court over this and lose, and then have the whole system collapse."

For many, alterations in the substance of the standards represented a disappointment—they no longer saw the reforms as promoting the most innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Instead, they perceived compromises on standards or assessment practices as a slip back to old, detrimental ways (e.g. Noble and Smith, 1994). To others, these changes represented a positive outcome for what was intended to be an interactive dialogue among state policymakers, the profession, and the public over the content of knowledge and the scope of student performance. An as yet unanswered question is whether recent efforts to achieve greater "balance" between more innovative and more traditional approaches will result in coherent standards striking a middle road or in less thoughtful and more contrived aggregations of the old and the new.

District-Level Standards Development

A majority of the districts in our sample were actively pursuing standards-based curricular and instructional change. Twenty of the twenty-five districts included in this round of field research had undertaken their own efforts to develop curriculum frameworks or guidelines.

District standard-setting was not merely a response to state leadership in standards development. To be sure, some districts were more reactive than proactive, but in every state there were some districts that acted in advance of the state, to be prepared for or to anticipate the state reforms. In addition, districts sometimes became a source of guidance and leadership to the state. As in the 1980s, districts conducted a substantial amount of policymaking on their own, substantially leading or elaborating upon state efforts and proving that the extension of governmental authority at one level is not necessarily a "zero sum" game (Fuhrman and Elmore, 1990). Rather than stunting local initiative and decisionmaking, state action often stimulated (see also Spillane et al., 1995) or at least did not inhibit districts' and schools' own curricular and instructional activities.

Indeed, the impact of state standards initiatives on local policies was often more subtle and indirect than what critics who were fearful of aggressive state or federal control over instruction often pictured. Contrary to their concerns that standards-based reforms would over-extend state and federal authority, in practice these policies followed well within the constraints of the decentralized American tradition.[6] For instance, local staff in nearly all the sites typically

[6] The founding fathers called for deference to the states in educational matters, and fears that government would infringe religious liberty and thought have led states throughout American history to devolve most matters of curriculum content to local authorities. The fragmented nature of our political institutions and school organizations also has prevented higher authorities (even district administrators and principals at the local level) from taking strong control over the curriculum, even local district administrators and principals.

regarded the state's standards as only one of many resources they used to generate their own, more detailed curriculum guidance policies and programs. They reported turning to multiple sources—the state, but also national standards groups, other districts, and their own communities—for input to develop their own, tailored guidance documents. One California district asked its high school staff to elaborate state frameworks and create a workable local curriculum.

Some of the more entrepreneurial district educators sought external funds or sources of technical support for reform from foundations, national organizations, and other groups. These multiple projects provided assistance in fleshing out the reforms, but they could also pull the district in many different directions. Sometimes these directions were complementary and reinforcing, but sometimes they were competing. Similarly, the general flexibility stemming from the broad detail of state standards documents raises ancillary questions about how well local efforts cohere with state policymakers' intentions. After all, one of the primary motivations for standards-based reform was to build some general congruence across a typically fragmented educational system (see Smith and O'Day, 1991).

Local curriculum standards were usually more specific than ones produced by the state or other groups. For example, while the California framework documents were organized by grade-level clusters (K-3, 4-8, 9-12), three out of the four districts we visited were expanding on them to develop standards for each grade level. States intentionally provided standards that were broadly-worded enough to allow significant room for local curricular decisionmaking. Politically, state policymakers did not want to exacerbate the kinds of fears and concerns just mentioned—i.e., that they were going to exert a heavy, controlling hand over local curricula. Equally compelling for many state administrators was a strategic theory about motivating meaningful local change. Some of our state respondents expressed the belief that, for the standards to truly take hold, local educators would need to elaborate upon them and make them appropriate for their own contexts. In addition to this empowerment and buy-in strategy, state policymakers also believed that the very constructivist goals they were trying to foster required that they not provide overly specified curriculum guidance documents, lest they lead to the kind of lock-step, rote instruction that many reformers were trying to change.

Ironically and, again, contrary to most conservative critics' concerns, most educators wanted more—not less—external guidance and support for instruction than they received from the state or other groups. For example, the most frequent complaint about state standards centered on their broad, general nature and the implicit or explicit assumption that district and school staff would have the capacity, resources, time, and expertise to flesh them out into a local curriculum. Local educators in Kentucky felt that they lacked the time or knowledge to create the kinds of curricular and instructional programs they needed to meet the new state expectations; consequently, they demanded that the state provide them with more specific guidance and support.[7] This criticism launched the state department of education onto the task of

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[7] Local administrators and teachers also felt that, although the sentiment was unofficial, the state was discouraging them from using textbooks as part of their efforts to provide more constructivist teaching.

creating yet another (fourth) set of standards documents that would be more detailed than the state *Transformations* framework. Finding the right balance between specificity and flexibility has been a persistent challenge for policymakers. Said one California administrator about his state's frameworks—which, comparatively speaking, were more detailed than most—"The state stuff is full of fluff and sweeping general statements, and is not much help."

Many others talked about a need for more time and resources to perform up to the challenges laid out by new standards and assessment policies. District staff felt that meeting these needs were particularly difficult given the fact that local central office personnel were being reduced in many sites. And reform strategies have often ignored the role of central agencies. Furthermore, restructuring initiatives were decentralizing curricular guidance and responsibilities to the school site, thus amplifying the need to prepare even more people to conduct new and different tasks. In fact, historically, local administrators and teachers have not had the kind of expert knowledge and skill necessary to develop curricular programs and materials, leading them to depend heavily on textbook and testing publishers for structure and guidance (Walker, 1990).

In recognition of the stringent demands of the new reforms and usually limited local capacity to perform the development work, many states such as Kentucky and California attempted to provide additional support and more varied kinds of guidance to teachers and administrators. Over the years, for example, California developed curriculum replacement units, developed lists of additional curricular materials and resources, and supported summer institutes and teacher networks, among other things. Nevertheless, district staff expressed the need for more and more varied assistance. Indeed, district staff in most states were often struggling to patch together temporary solutions to help teachers meet the challenges of reform, but these could be very traditional and piecemeal solutions. For example, a curriculum specialist in one Connecticut district devised a scope and sequencing guide that matched pages in the textbook to the statewide tests. Such approaches to improving test performance do not address the gaps in teachers' content knowledge or instructional strategies.

Like their counterparts at the state level, the theme of the day for district policymakers was balance—both in terms of new curriculum and instructional goals, and governance reforms like site-based management. Administrators in several districts, for example, talked about reassuring their publics that they were embracing the basics as well as more challenging goals.

In sum, we found that the concept of standards-based reform in general served to frame many districts' approaches to instructional guidance, even if they perceived their own states' particular standards documents or policy approaches as insufficient or weak. The states' standards documents and related reforms helped to focus district attention on curriculum and instruction, but they were neither the only nor sometimes even the most important sources of information for districts. For other reasons, such as the broadly worded nature of the state documents, the slow pace of reform in some states, and the presence of other external players in standards reform, district staff felt they had a lot of freedom and flexibility to pursue their own path to change. Yet, they also felt they needed much more support than they were getting to enable instructional change to proceed. Finally, at the district level, as at the state level, an emphasis was placed on balancing new and old approaches to instruction.

Conclusion

We have noted the differences among states in their approach to the substance and specificity of standards. These variations in part reflect the relative influence of professionals and the public in the standards development process. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, California established an agenda-setting strategy which maximized the participation and control of leading educators over framework development, which then became known for their cutting-edge vision within specific disciplines. In contrast, Kentucky started with a citizen survey, a populist agenda-setting approach which yielded a broader, largely skill-based set of standards. The public emphatically pushed for a greater correspondence between student activities in school and work (Massell, 1994a). Do such differences among standards matter when it comes to teaching and learning? As the standards are completed, and elaborated and interpreted by local educators, the relationships among different approaches and changes in classroom practice and student performance will be important topics of study.

States also varied in the extent to which they tackled multiple aspects of standards-based reform at once, and tried to implement far-reaching, progressive visions, or pursued change more incrementally. In some states, such as Kentucky, policymakers undertook an aggressive, comprehensive reform strategy, addressing all central policy areas in one reform law. They also pushed for very progressive kinds of standards as well as assessments. Kentucky had the unique impetus of a court order invalidating its entire education system as the result of a school finance equity suit. But at the beginning of this decade, the more comprehensive, wholesale approach seemed attractive to other states as well. For example, Florida's 1991 reform law dealt with standards, assessment, accountability and school-based management all at once, and California moved far ahead of the curve in trying to establish policies and practices that reflected constructivist ideals.

The comprehensive approach had the political value of striking while the iron was hot, and it was a strategy that built on state legislative tradition. Many of the school finance and equity related reforms of the 1970s and the post-*A Nation at Risk* reforms of the 1980s were incorporated into omnibus packages that combined the specific interests of many individual legislators and hence were able to garner majorities (McDonnell and Fuhrman, 1985; Fuhrman 1994a). In addition, many worried that if policymakers took an incremental approach, states would fall behind on reform and lose the "political moment" of consensus for change.

In the nine states in our sample—which restricts broad generalization—we found that those states that moved incrementally did <u>not</u> end up significantly further behind the more comprehensive states in terms of building the basic policy infrastructure for standards-based reform. For example, as political and public opposition to standards surfaced, some of the more aggressive states like California were forced to backtrack and regroup. Alternatively, states like Connecticut and New Jersey that moved more slowly on developing standards documents, and made incremental improvements in assessments, continued to make steady progress. In those states, the assessments were well-accepted instruments of state policy; state involvement in curricular guidance was less so. Policymakers consequently relied on state tests to "ratchet up" expectations of student performance gradually over time, a strategy which seems to have fared

them relatively well politically[8]. It may be that the relative absence of press, and public attention and engagement, will yield problems in implementation down the road, but for the moment it seems that low-key, slower approaches were well-suited to the political environment in these states.

In contrast, Kentucky managed to sustain its comprehensive and wide-reaching efforts. However, it is important to recognize the very unique features of that state's political and social environment. It has had a large and stable cadre of reform leaders, both inside and outside of government, who even predate KERA. The gubernatorial candidate most supportive of KERA prevailed in the last election, and all institutions of government have remained under one party. As a southern state, Kentucky educators and the public have been accustomed to a strong central authority, and the KERA reforms did not represent a large extension of the state's mandate over educational affairs. Importantly, school finance reform preceded instructional guidance initiatives, and equalized resources to the point where this is no longer a key issue. And finally, the state has a homogeneous population, and racial divisions do not predominate. Thus, while Kentucky holds many important and valuable lessons about engaging in standards-based reform, its uniqueness must be acknowledged as well.

As interesting as such state-to-state differences are, the similarities across them are even more striking. All of our states used iterative standards development processes that involved rounds of professional and public consultation; all made revisions in their initial plans and documents; all took longer than originally expected; all struggled with how to organize their standards and how specific to make them. In each of them, many districts embarked on standards development as well, and most local educators we spoke to were interested in more, not less, guidance from states. Most of our sites attempted to strike a better balance between innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction and more traditional strategies.

The progress of standards-based reform, as well as the agenda and goals it promotes, has become a national event, with many commonalities across the states. The nationalization of education reform initiatives is not a new story. The school finance equalization initiatives of the 1970s and the excellence reforms of the 1980s swept from state-to-state with remarkable speed and consistency. (Kirst and Meister, 1983) Improved communications and the increasing interest of national policymaker and educator associations in education policy are important influences. It appears that the prominent role of national funders and "third sector" groups in the current reforms has enhanced nationalization even further. As noted above, both states and districts drew upon federal programs, such as the National Science Foundation's systemic initiatives and Goals 2000. The Statewide Systemic Initiatives were particularly influential, providing a continuing source of ideas and of policy development, and promoting standards reform even in states like Georgia where political leadership was not strongly supportive. National disciplinary

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[8] When Connecticut policymakers tried to extend the state's authority to mandate curricular standards, they received a lashing from conservative groups in 1994. They retreated from this effort and turned back again to relying on incremental improvements in their state tests to lead reform. The state continues to prepare voluntary curriculum frameworks.

and professional associations supplied ideas and models; foundations lent additional monetary support; and policymaker associations facilitated the sharing of lessons about the process of standards development.

The opposition to standards reforms also took national channels. Conservative groups shared literature and tactics across state lines, just as policymakers and educators from various states helped each other respond to the challenges. One of the strengths of our system is that the various "laboratories of democracy" at the state and local level can learn from one another. The differences among them produce contrasts that shed significant light on alternative options. It may be, however, that learning and adaptation is occurring so swiftly in the modern age that the variation which provided the natural experiment is becoming narrower.

Progress on Assessment Reform

For the past several years, state efforts to improve assessment programs have been intensive and widespread. Policymakers concentrated their attention on several major design goals, which included among other things: the creation of tests aligned to new content standards, the elimination of norm-referenced tests, and the replacement of more traditional multiple-choice assessments with performance-based exams. As was the case with the standards documents, progress in assessment reform was steady and incremental over time, though the speed of change varied from state to state. In this section, we concentrate most of our attention on the effort undertaken with performance-based assessment. However, we will first very briefly mention progress and issues regarding test alignment to new standards, and efforts to remove norm-referenced testing.

From the beginning of the standards-based reform movement, a key objective was to create compatible, linked policy instruments that mirrored new, more demanding learning goals. State policymakers also demanded customization and alignment of commercial tests to their own content and performance standards because of the care they had taken to craft a consensus among state stakeholders for their new standards. By 1994-95, Connecticut, Kentucky and Texas reported that their each component of their assessment program was matched to existing content guidelines or standards, and Georgia and Florida reported one aligned component (see Table 3). The extent to which states had achieved these linkages depended upon many factors, including the progress they had made on developing their standards documents, but also because of their overall development design strategy. For example, states such as Florida waited to make any major assessment changes until they had completed the standards development and adoption process—a process which was delayed and which subsequently slowed any progress in the testing arena. But others states such as Connecticut and Kentucky really started with reforms in assessments, and moved towards expressing their curricular expectations in standards documents later, over time. In these states, alignment between assessments and standards was more of an iterative process than a linear one. One alignment issue of concern in several states in our sample, and generally across the country, was the gap between the content areas in which standards were developed, and the subjects that states would actually assess. For example, Florida developed standards in seven areas but planned to test students only in communications, writing and mathematics. Similarly, Kentucky developed standards but not assessments in the arts and humanities and vocational studies. The absence of statewide testing in these subjects may lead to their neglect in the school curriculum, as well as a potential loss of resources for these content areas at the local district and school levels.

Secondly, in a number of states, policymakers wanted to eliminate the use of norm-referenced tests. In norm-referenced testing, individual student scores are compared to the performance of other students in the testing pool, not to an absolute standard of knowledge. Conceivably, then, a student who knows little about a subject could get a decent score on the test if their peers perform poorly as well. In addition, norm-referenced tests have long been criticized for being ill-matched to the actual curricula that students receive in school.

Table 3
Status of State Testing Programs in CPRE States, 1994-95

State	Assessment Component	Grades/Subjects Tested	Item Format	Scoring	Aligned to Standards	Other
CA	California Assessment of Academic Achievement (CAAA)	4 - 5, 8, 10 Math, reading, writing, science, history/social sciences.	Planned	TBA	Planned	CLAS vetoed in 1994. Plan is to implement CAAA statewide testing component by 1999.
	Pupil Incentive Program State provides $5/pupil if districts use norm-referenced test of basic skills.	2 - 10 Reading, spelling, writing, math	Local option	NRT	No	
CT	Connecticut Mastery Test	4, 6, 8 Math, language arts	Mixed	CRT	Yes	
	Connecticut Academic Performance Test	10 Math, language arts, science, integrated multidisciplinary	Mixed	CRT	Yes	
FL	Florida Writing Assessment Program	4, 8, 10 Writing	PB	PL	Yes	RFP issued for new grades 4, 8, and 10 test, to be field tested in 1997. Will primarily be multiple choice but will also include performance items. The Grade 10 Assessment Test will be eliminated. The High School Competency Test will be realigned to the standards, and the Writing Assessment will continue.
	Grade Ten Assesment Test	10 Math, communications	FR	NRT	No	
	High School Competency Test	11 Math, communications	FR	CNT	No	
	District Norm-Referenced Tests Districts must administer and submit results to the state.	4, 8 Math, reading	Local option	NRT	No	
GA	Iowa Test of Basic Skills/TAP	3, 5, 8, 11 Math, reading with science and social studies	FR	NRT	No	Proposal to eliminate Curriculum-Based Assessment was defeated, but they were made voluntary. Issue of elimination will be revisited.
	Curriculum-Based Assessment	3, 5, 8, 11 Math, language arts, science, social studies, writing	Mixed	CRT	Yes	

Table 3 (cont.)
Status of State Testing Programs in CPRE States, 1994-95

KY	Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS)	4, 8, 12 Math, reading, science, social studies, writing	PB and Portfolios in math and writing	PL	Yes	Changes in KIRIS for 1995-96 will include: 1. CTB Terra Nova in math (3,6,9) 2. multiple choice items 3. KIRIS spread out across more grade levels 4. Performance events out 5. Math portfolios experimental.
MN	Graduation Rule Two components: a) Basic Requirements. Districts can select any minimum competency test to meet these basic skills standards b) Profile of Learning. Districts can select which of these more challenging standards to assess, and use any assessments they wish.	a) Basic Requirements: Reading and math in the 9th grade b) Profile of Learning: Interdisciplinary, anytime between grades 9 and 12	Local Option	Local Option	Planned	Graduation Rule to be implemented in 1998. State designed test districts can use for Basic Requirements. State sponsored development of performance-based assessments that can satisfy different Profile of Learning standards. Writing and science will be added to the Basic Requirements.
	Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Process (PER) Districts must assess sample of students in 3 grades	Local Option for both grade levels and subjects.	Local Option	Local Option	No	PER set to expire in 1996 and be replaced with the Graduation Rule.
NJ	Early Warning Test (EWT)	4, 8 Math, reading, writing	Mixed	PI	Planned for 4th grade	Tests are evolving from basic-skill, multiple-choice format to include more performance-based elements; 4th-grade EWT under development.
	High School Proficiency Test	11 Math, reading, writing	Mixed	CRT		
SC	Basic Skills Assessment Program	3, 6, 8, 10 Math, reading, science, with writing sample	Mixed	CRT	Planned	K-3 Continuous Assessment Project piloted, 36 sites piloting performance assessments.
	Metropolitan Achievement Test 7	4, 5, 7, 9, 11 Math, reading, language arts	FR	NRT	No	
TX	Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)	3 - 8, 10 Math, reading, writing, science, social studies	Mixed	CRT	Yes	1995 TAAS test released to allow public scrutiny.
	TAAS End-of-Course Exams	9 - 12 Algebra I, Biology I	Mixed	CRT		End-of Course assessments will be piloted for English II, US History in 1996.

KEY: Item Format: FR = fixed response; PB = performance based. Mixed Scoring: NRT = norm-referenced; CRT = criterion-referenced; PL = performance level.

But efforts to remove norm-referenced tests in California and Kentucky met with resistance from parents and educators who demanded information about how their children's scores compared to others. In addition, local administrators often wanted to use norm-referenced tests to evaluate instructional programs. Thus, even after Kentucky had removed norm-referenced testing from its statewide testing program, 40 percent of its districts reintroduced or maintained such tests locally. In response to these kinds of pressures, Kentucky and California reinstated norm-referenced test components. While Kentucky's KIRIS exam itself is not normed, state policymakers added a portion of a commercial mathematics test, the CTB Terra Nova, which they believed was reasonably aligned to their standards. California's new assessment law authorized a $5/pupil incentive for districts to administer commercial, norm-referenced tests in grades 2-10. Texas, which removed its norm-referenced test component in 1993, sought to norm its criterion-referenced TAAS exams. When the impracticality of this approach became apparent, the state called for TAAS to be aligned with a norm-referenced test, although this project was not funded as of 1995. Unlike the other states, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina maintained their norm-referenced components throughout the period, although Florida planned to drop one normed piece of its system (the 10th grade Assessment Test).

Performance Assessment

The most prominent and widespread goal of assessment reform has been to change the nature of test items away from common, multiple-choice and fixed-response formats towards more open-ended, authentic learning tasks. The latter, often called *performance-based assessments,* ask students to apply their learning to such tasks as writing a paragraph or essay in response to a question, writing a research paper, conducting scientific experiments, or engaging in computer simulations of scientific activity (Pechman and Hammond, 1991). Collecting and evaluating student work from the classroom over an extended period of time and placing it into portfolios is another new assessment strategy that some advocate as providing a more complete picture of students' knowledge and understanding. Performance assessments in general tend to prompt students to use more analytical thinking skills. In addition to better gauging students' understanding and thinking abilities, advocates argue that performance-based assessments would have repercussions for teaching in the classroom, moving it away from rote drill-and-practice techniques towards more problem-based, hands-on kinds of pedagogies (Wiggins, 1993; Flexer, et al., 1994).

All nine CPRE states experimented with performance assessment to some degree over the course of the past five years, but the extent to which this strategy was included in testing programs varied. By the end of 1995, six states—California, Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Minnesota and New Jersey—incorporated or planned to incorporate some type of performance-based testing in their statewide assessments. Three had no plans to do so. The South Carolina legislature, while supporting experimentation with performance assessment in 36 districts, maintained its statewide basic-skills test and did not accept any proposed alterations. While Texas piloted performance assessments statewide, these were not included on the Texas assessment. Georgia policymakers took little action on performance assessment reforms.

Performance assessment initiatives were of different character and scope across the states. Kentucky implemented and maintained the most comprehensive performance-based system of all the states. Over the past several years, the Kentucky Instructional Results and Information System (KIRIS) evolved into a completely performance-based assessment. In 1993, state policymakers decided to exclude multiple choice items from accountability calculations, when analyses suggested that they were not needed for technical reasons, and once teachers had time to get used to performance types of items. Uniquely among our states—and indeed, most states around the country—KIRIS also used mathematics and writing portfolios and included those results in its accountability index. As a result of some expert reviews of the program, policymakers planned several changes in 1995. For example, Kentucky will once again use multiple choice items in its accountability index in order to broaden subject coverage and increase reliability. While writing portfolios will be retained, math portfolios will be changed to pilots not included in the index, and group performance tasks (performance events) will be eliminated. Despite these changes, policymakers intended to retain the largely performance-based character of the KIRIS system.

California also developed and administered a primarily performance-based statewide assessment in 1992 and 1993, but unlike Kentucky this system did not survive the technical, political and other challenges it encountered. Among other things, expert reviews found that the California Learning Assessment System (CLAS) did not produce technically-sound school level scores. Further, the department focused on producing school level results, and scored only a sample of individual student responses. But providing individual-level results had been the governor's key policy objective for CLAS. The lack of individual scores spurred parents' discomfort with the exam, as did the outcry of religious groups that perceived of the test as an imposition of liberal values. Concerns about test security meant that items were not publicly reviewed, and this exacerbated religious groups' concerns. Thus in 1994 the governor vetoed continued funding for CLAS. But in 1995, A.B. 265 was passed which authorized the development of another state assessment program. While it reestablished a place for traditional testing—it provided an incentive to districts to use norm-referenced, basic skills tests in grades 2 through 10, and reintroduced multiple choice items in a new statewide test—it also allowed room for measures of applied learning (i.e., performance assessments).

Some state policymakers adopted a more incremental strategy for introducing performance assessments into the statewide testing program. Partly due to resource constraints, Connecticut added performance-based tasks to their basic-skills Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) gradually over time. By 1994-95, approximately 30 percent of the CMT was performance-based, while the remainder consisted of multiple-choice items. Policymakers planned for the next iteration to contain a higher percentage of performance-based tasks. Its 10th grade exam, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), had more performance items as well as an innovative, integrated knowledge component. Similarly, New Jersey slowly added performance items to its more traditional format.

Policymakers in a few states adopted a slower, more wait-and-see attitude towards performance-based testing. Policymakers in these states provided support for experimentation and piloting, and planned to decide later whether to incorporate these assessments into the state

exams. For example, Texas conducted statewide pilots of performance assessments, but these were discontinued in part because of difficulties in administering them on a large scale basis, and in part because of political challenges from conservative groups that perceived performance assessments as akin to Outcomes-Based Education. As a result, the 1994-95 assessment was a more challenging, but still multiple choice, test. Similarly, South Carolina policymakers supported locally-developed performance assessments, which some hoped would be integrated into a new statewide exam. Ultimately, however, the legislature rejected changes in its statewide basic skills test. Florida, which also provided funding for experimental efforts, eventually included a modest proportion of performance items in its programs. While this was less than originally envisioned by many state reformers, performance assessment had come under intense political attack during the elections, so its persistence at all could be seen somewhat as a victory for the idea. Minnesota provided resources and assistance for over 1,000 teachers in 14 districts to develop performance assessments deliberately connected to the Profile of Learning component of the state's Graduation Rule. In this case, the state planned to allow districts to select from these assessment models or others of their own choosing to demonstrate progress on the Profile of Learning.[9]

Clearly, reforms to introduce performance-based assessments ran into a number of obstacles in the states. Here we address two. The first is the policy objective of using performance assessments to serve multiple purposes, and the technical and practical issues associated with that goal. The second is the challenge of building a base of understanding and support among the public and educators.

Multiple Purposes

Assessments can be designed to serve many different purposes, ranging from diagnoses of individual students' learning strengths and weaknesses, to improving curriculum and instruction, to evaluating programs, to holding schools and districts accountable for student performance. Different test designs can serve these different purposes. For example, to be most useful to a classroom teacher, tests need to be highly detailed and closely aligned to the classroom curriculum in order to provide rich, accurate information about individual students' thinking (Resnick and Resnick, 1992). But policymakers and the public do not need such detailed information to produce accurate accountability reports; in fact, such detail hampers cost-effective and efficient analyses. Similarly, while performance tasks may support better instructional techniques in the classroom, multiple-choice items are adequate to provide an accounting of school or district performance. And, finally, while norm-referenced tests may not provide good data on how or why individuals think the way they do, they have arguably performed well on predicting future student achievement, and ranking students for college selection, course placement, or jobs (Pechman and Hammond, 1991).

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[9] While Minnesota was also preparing a statewide test for measuring the Basic Requirements component of its Graduation Rule, districts similarly will be allowed to use any aligned assessment of their own choosing. These options are in keeping with the state's long tradition of local control.

Such tensions have long been recognized in the research community. Advocates of performance-based formats have argued that these assessments could be designed in such a way as to close the gap between tests that are useful for accountability and ones that support good instructional practices in the classroom. They stressed that the technical issues confronting performance assessment, like reliability and validity, could be resolved to make such tasks useful for holding students, schools and districts accountable.

To tackle such issues, state policymakers pooled their intellectual and fiscal resources by participating in collaboratives to collectively develop and pilot performance-based assessments, such as the New Standards Project or the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) initiative of the Council of Chief State School Officers. They also hoped that by working together they would reduce the developmental time and expense associated with creating performance tasks.

Many of the technical problems were resolved. For example, the open-ended nature of performance tasks, which require students to evaluate situations and solve problems, and draw on a range of thinking strategies and skills, produce highly variable student responses. To address these variability issues and to ensure that activities were linked to common standards, Kentucky introduced "on-demand" elements in its portfolios—common, specific questions or tasks to which all students must respond. To make sure reported results were reliable, they also established a system of auditing scores, and provided extensive teacher training to improve the inter-rater reliability of scoring on portfolios.

But some issues, such as validity of some kinds of performance assessments over time (i.e., obtaining longitudinal data), or producing reliable and cost-efficient scores for individual students using wholly performance-based methods, remain difficult challenges. So, for example, research shows that when a substantial number of performance tasks are used, one can produce accurate and fair estimates of student achievement (Shavelson, Baxter, and Pine, 1992; Shavelson, Gao, and Baxter, 1993). However, such a strategy considerably inflates the expense and time associated with performance assessments, factors that weigh in policymakers' decisions. California policymakers had restricted the testing time per subject area to no more than one or two hours, a limitation which produced unacceptable measurement errors on individual results from the 1993 California Learning Assessment Program (CLAS) (Cronbach, Bradburn, and Horvitz, 1994). If students had performed more tasks over a longer period, these problems would have been avoided. Similarly, when Texas attempted to pilot statewide science and social studies tasks, reports came back from teachers in schools without the necessary basic equipment or materials. Making sure all students have access to the resources needed to do these kinds of performance tasks is essential to produce valid and reliable results, but also costs time and money. Without these guarantees, using wholly performance-based assessments for accountability purposes is difficult.

As a result, an increasingly popular strategy for resolving the technical issues, as well as the practical ones of testing time and reducing costs, was to mix performance assessment formats with multiple choice items. As mentioned, such a strategy was adopted early on by New Jersey

and Connecticut, and later embraced by Florida and Kentucky. And, as we shall see, this mixed model also became a way of resolving political problems with the public.

Public Support

Policymakers confronted a number of challenges in developing and maintaining public support for assessment reform. In some cases, schools with strong scores on more traditional assessments did not always rank well on new exams. For instance, in California, Kentucky, and Connecticut, some suburban communities that performed poorly on new assessments voiced anger and opposition to the new assessments. In Texas, conservative groups charged that performance assessments were "soft" and less demanding than multiple-choice items which require yes-or-no, right-or-wrong answers. Also, conservative groups in California and elsewhere grew suspicious of the kinds of liberal values and critical thinking skills they perceived in the new exams.

Because test development is typically an "insider's" activity—involving technical specialists and teachers but rarely the public—these kinds of public concerns and suspicions deepened. In response, California's new assessment law called for a high level of public scrutiny in test development. A six-person Statewide Pupil Assessment Review Panel will review the tests to ensure that they do not contain questions about students' or parents' personal beliefs about sex, family life, morality, or religion and questions that evaluate personal characteristics such as honesty, sociability, or self-esteem. Legislators and local board members can also examine the content of any approved or adopted test if they agree to maintain confidentiality (EdSource, 1995). The law also takes some responsibility for test development out of the hands of "insiders" at the state department of education. Texas enacted a similar policy to address the public's concerns and plans to publicly release exams after each administration. Since releasing the test prevents its reuse, this policy poses a considerable expense for the state at a time when some legislators are already complaining about the high cost of test development. The estimated cost of releasing TAAS is $6 million.

But another strategy for addressing these political issues was for states like California, Florida and Kentucky to adopt the mixed assessment model that contains both multiple choice and performance-based items, and that explicitly targets basic as well as higher order thinking skills. For parents and the public, multiple choice tests provide a comfortable, familiar metric using what at least on the surface seems an objective format. Thus, in 1994-95 the status of change in state assessment programs mirrored what we saw in standards—a shift back to a more moderate, and in some policymakers' views, more balanced approach to reform. Not all original policy objectives were achieved. But the new strategies were not dismissed, and were mixed in with old practices.

Districts and Assessment Reform

Many districts, like states, sought to reform their testing programs by improving alignment with standards and incorporating new, performance-based assessments. They faced

similar issues in terms of coordinating policies and handling the technical, political, fiscal and intellectual challenges of performance assessment. But the challenges of alignment and implementation were often more complex. For example, districts needed to create horizontal alignment between local assessments and emerging districtwide standards, but also to generate vertical alignments to state standards and assessment policies. In decentralizing districts, issues also emerged about building vertical connections down to the multiple school sites making their own decisions about curriculum and instruction. Site-based decisionmaking makes implementation a greater challenge.

The nine districts in our sample that were most extensively experimenting with performance-based assessments were primarily high capacity districts. Following the model of standards-based reform, they wanted to develop tests that meshed well with their own curriculum standards and goals for improving teaching. In one of the nine districts that was low capacity, a modest performance assessment project had been undertaken at the initiative of a local university, but these efforts were unconnected to other district plans.

Many of these nine districts leveraged support to undertake performance assessment initiatives when their state policymakers were planning or already incorporating performance assessments in the statewide exam. Local movement in this direction, then, was politically justified as being coordinated with state goals. By 1994-95, some were concerned about the backsliding they perceived in their state's commitment to performance assessment, at least in terms of broad use. District policymakers feared that their own efforts to innovate would be isolated and lose political momentum if their states moved back to traditional assessments.

Concerns about vertical alignment of local with state assessments led most of the other 16 districts in our sample to simply serve—or to wait to serve—what the state had to offer. But the high level of local reliance on state testing in these districts was also associated with their being volatile, fragmented and low capacity sites without the financial resources or political capital[10] to move more independently. In a few cases, especially in Connecticut and Texas, district administrators used state tests almost exclusively because they perceived them to be good and/or extremely high stakes exams which limited their willingness to look at other measures of student performance.

The nine districts using new forms of performance assessment shared many of the states' lessons and experiences. Districts that moved rapidly to adopt new assessments quickly learned the importance of balancing these with the kinds of traditional methods and practices better understood by the public and teachers. For example, in one Georgia district that had tried to implement Outcomes-Based Education and faced a conservative backlash, an administrator said:

> *We realized that we had created the perception that we had abandoned the basics for untried educational experiments. A major theme emerged that had to do with*

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[10] Low political capital here derives from many of these districts' poor performance on state tests.

balance: performance assessment and traditional assessment, cooperative learning, and independent learning.

They felt mixed models were important, too, because it would take time to acquaint teachers with performance assessment. Respondents in half the districts talked about the importance of professional development not only for administering performance assessments but for understanding what the results mean and how this information could be translated into instructional changes and improvement. While early advocates of performance-based assessments claimed that their meaning to teaching and learning is more obvious and self-evident than a number on a norm-referenced, multiple choice test, experience has shown that the meaning of performance-based assessments for instruction is not always clear to parents and educators. In fact, training programs have been notoriously weak in helping teachers understand how to use even traditional tests to diagnose instructional needs (see Massell, 1995). Some states, like Minnesota and Kentucky, involved teachers in the development and/or scoring of state exams to begin to enhance teachers' understanding of assessment. While teachers frequently cite the value of these experiences, such activities do not necessarily answer teachers' questions about how to translate the results of performance-based assessments into improved student instruction. In addition, district administrators and school staff spoke about the importance of mixed models to calm public concerns about moving too quickly with "new-fangled" reforms.

Another CPRE study looking more closely at local (as well as state) decisions about use of performance assessment found that locals were often concerned about the impact of such testing on teachers' time and schools' capacity. Many believed that portfolios, for example, had to be simple and easy to use, and, especially at the elementary level, cover more than one subject. Teachers simply found it overwhelming to maintain two or more portfolios. Similarly, Kentucky decided to spread its current KIRIS exams across more grade-levels to reduce the burden on teachers at the benchmark grades. And finally, as at the state level, costs and budgetary constraints played a key role in whether and to what extent performance assessments were adopted. While these issues were not always the primary explanation for policy decisions; financial considerations weighed more heavily when policymakers believed that the technical and practical challenges of reform were not satisfactorily resolved (Massell, forthcoming).

Conclusion

Since the early 1990s, state and local efforts to improve assessment systems were strongly motivated by the ideas about best practices circulating across broad, and often non-governmental, reform networks. Policymakers were convinced of the logic of aligning standards and assessments, and the value of performance assessments. In fact, like standards, the importance of these reform goals has persisted, and implementation has proceeded, if not always in a rapid, linear, or all-encompassing fashion. Policymakers mixed the new with more traditional assessments to solve the range of technical, political, feasibility and financial issues that emerged with these assessment reforms. What remains to be answered are lingering questions about the impact of these innovations on instruction. Teachers need long-term professional development

to aid them in the use of alternative assessments in the classroom, and in interpreting its meaning for instruction. In addition, some have argued that assessments which blend traditional features and items with performance-based formats in effect undermine the substantive and pedagogical goals of reform (see Noble and Smith,1994; Nolen, et al., 1989). It may be that such solutions end up sending confusing signals to educators. Yet it may also be that these approaches will produce incremental, and sustained, changes in teaching and learning.

Building Professional Capacity for Reform

Recent education reform initiatives have the potential to greatly extend and transform the roles of teachers and administrators. With an increase in academic standards for students and the devolution of decisionmaking to schools under site-based management initiatives, teachers and administrators are being asked not only to teach more challenging curriculum to all students, but also to establish new relationships with each other and with parents. These new roles require a set of skills and knowledge that are unfamiliar to many teachers and administrators.

In our research, we examined how the nine states were changing policy and practice to build professional capacity for standards-based reform, centering our attention on two specific areas of teacher-related policy: licensure and certification, and professional development (see Table 4).[11] We focused on identifying major trends and changes and on analyzing the broad connections between professional development activities and the state's reform agenda.

Licensure and Certification

At the beginning of the standards movement, policymakers focused their energies on developing new instructional guidance instruments, such as curriculum guidelines and frameworks, and assessments. They paid less attention to building the capacity to enact reform in classrooms and schools (Massell and Fuhrman, 1994). Now, several years into reform, these questions are being addressed more systematically, especially in the area of initial licensure.

During the 1980s, most states pursued revisions in their teacher certification requirements. They required new teachers, for example, to pass basic-skills and subject-matter tests to ensure minimal qualification; many states also revised the certification process to include peer support for beginning teachers. But by 1994-95, many of our state policymakers viewed their teacher certification systems as poorly synchronized to the new, more challenging instructional goals of standards-based reform. In some instances, their teacher tests screened only the very poorest performers. In South Carolina and Georgia, for example, 99 percent of teacher certification candidates passed state tests. As a result, Georgia decided to eliminate them; other states began to develop new, more challenging assessments for entry-level teacher certification. Performance-based teacher assessments were adopted in Florida, for

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[11] During the 1980s and early 1990s, raising pay was a strategy used to attract higher quality teachers, but this year teacher compensation was not a major initiative in the majority of our states that maintained a minimum salary schedule. (Texas was the exception to this trend.) In Connecticut, where raises in the pay scale made their teachers the highest paid on average in the nation, public opinion on this subject had become quite negative in part because the state's economic health declined a few years after the salary increases were made. Districts were squeezed by the state's raising salary levels on the one hand and declining fiscal support on the other. This situation created somewhat of a backlash against any major new state reform proposals.

Table 4
State Professional Development (PD) Requirements, Structures and Funding: 1995-96

State	Mandated Time for PD	Mandated Local PD Plans	State Funds for Local PD	State PD Standards	Licensure Renewal Required	State-Funded Infrastructure	NBPTS Incentives[12]
CA	No; 8 school improvement days may be used for PD	No	No categorical PD allocation	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
CT	Yes; 18 hours of CEUs per year	Yes	No categorical PD allocation	No	Yes	Yes	No
FL	No; up to 16 non-instructional days may be used for PD	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
GA	No; 10 local use workdays may be used for PD	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
KY	Yes; 4 days	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
MN	No	No	No	No	Yes	No; regional teams	No
NJ	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
SC	Yes; 10 days	Yes; as part of 5-yr strategic plan	Yes	Yes; standards for SEA-sponsored PD only	Yes	No; SEA has Leadership Academy that offers PD institutes to school teams	No
TX	No; provisions available for districts to allocate up to 5 days	Yes	No	No	No; but renewal requirements must be in place by Nov '97	Yes	No

Data Source: CPRE State Professional Development Profiles, 1995-96

[12] NBPTS is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

example, and our respondents perceived an impact on the nature of instruction in teacher training institutions. Texas developed performance standards for initial certification in anticipation of a proposed performance-based test. Connecticut tried to make its initial certification congruent with the philosophy and approach of its overall reform effort. Specifically, the state was in the process of revising its Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) evaluation and mentoring program to incorporate more content-based knowledge and constructivist teaching methods. Revised BEST evaluations would also use more performance-based measures, such as teacher portfolios. Minnesota began drafting regulations to align teacher certification with the Graduation Rule Profiles of Learning.

However, while states made some progress on policies regarding entry-level teachers, a number of efforts to change policies for experienced teachers met with labor opposition or were defeated for other reasons. Said one Connecticut respondent, after encountering such resistance, they hit a "brick wall of veteran teachers who have not been exposed to nor have the commitment to instructional reform practices. We are finding that there is no fertile ground within the system to continue teacher development [after BEST]." Two of our states—California and Georgia—provided incentives for teachers to earn mastery teaching certificates from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (see Table 4 above). But efforts to make structural changes in the legal terms of certification and licensure ran into barriers. For instance, New Jersey tried to make permanent certificates renewable, but the policy was defeated by a strong union lobby. However, even when states required experienced teachers to obtain educational credits for licensure renewal, courses were infrequently tied to specific reform goals, and teachers could earn continuing education credits (CEUs) even when courses were unrelated to their teaching. Furthermore, in some cases CEUs acted as a ceiling on teachers' willingness to pursue training. In Connecticut, for example, district administrators complained that once teachers satisfied the minimum CEUs needed for recertification, many refused to participate in professional development activities.

Efforts to professionalize the governance of teacher certification met with greater success. Approximately half of the nine states had established or were establishing new structures to foster greater professional input and oversight. One strategy was to decentralize the process. For example, in Florida the legislature shifted responsibility for certification renewal from the state to local districts. Similarly, Texas decentralized the administration of certification to its regional service centers. In 1996, Texas also authorized an independent professional educator licensure board, in which teachers will comprise over half of its membership. Finally, Georgia expanded the authority of their preexisting Professional Standards Commission to include both teacher testing and certification processes.

Professional Development

Over the past decade, most state policy regarding professional development focused on increasing access to training, providing funds to support these activities, or mandating professional development in specific areas (Corcoran, 1995). States took some initiative in providing professional development that was aligned to new reform goals, often by offering

direct technical assistance and support, or authorizing the creation of specific training programs by others. For example, Connecticut offered summer institutes for teachers, with theme workshops centered around specific instructional philosophies tied into state reform goals. For example, in 1994-95, they held workshops to help teachers and administrators on the new state assessments, on aligning local curriculum, instruction and assessment to the state Common Core of Learning, and on the national standards documents. These more thematic and aligned approaches was a shift from what one respondent called their formerly "shotgun" strategy, which chose activities based on newest trends. Connecticut, Texas and other states also used regional service delivery providers to offer districts' training which was often harnessed to particular state instructional reform objectives.

In all nine states, networks were becoming an important tool for building professional capacity tied to reform. California provided an interesting case in this regard, with networks emanating from several sources, including the university system, the state, and national or federal entities. Ten years ago, the university system in conjunction with the state department of education began to develop Subject Matter Projects, which are summer institutes focused on specific content areas and pedagogies. As of 1995, there were projects in 11 curricular areas in 90 sites. Schools were also involved in subject-specific networks such as Math Renaissance, a middle school initiative funded by the National Science Foundation. Similarly, California established a pilot network of schools focused on early literacy that targets children performing below grade level and incorporates professional development and parental involvement. Finally, through foundation and state support, grade-level initiatives in elementary, middle, and high schools were connected to California state reforms (Goertz, Floden, and O'Day, 1995).

These networks occurred in addition to a wide variety of national projects which provided extensive staff training as part of their approach to reform, such as the Accelerated Schools Program and Equity 2000. In other states (CT, GA, NJ, SC, and TX), the National Science Foundation's Statewide Systemic Initiative (SSI) spurred the creation of networks that, among other things, provided access to training in mathematics and science. In South Carolina, for example, the SSI was organized to set up training in regional hubs. District policymakers also pointed to national professional organizations, universities, and teacher unions as sources for professional development.

Many states seized the policy moment by inviting teachers to participate in the development of new state policy instruments. Teachers and other educators participated in the development of content standards in every state, while many became involved in the creation of assessment items and strategies in Minnesota and South Carolina, and in new certification procedures in Connecticut. In South Carolina, the state offered special multi-year incentive grants to encourage teachers to pilot developmentally appropriate practices in the primary grades. Teachers reported that the training accompanying the pilot enhanced their skills not just to change their own classroom practices but to support their colleagues as well. In addition to imparting new knowledge, these experiences contributed to the development of districts' own capacity to create standards, assessments, and other policy instruments at the local level. In addition to capitalizing on teachers' expertise, these experiences provided training and were opportunities for teachers to network with other professionals. But, all in all, states' professional

development activities frequently reach only a small proportion of teachers. Even in the California Subject Matter Projects, which have been running for a decade, it was estimated that only 2 percent of the state's teachers had actually participated by 1995 (Goertz, Floden, and O'Day, 1995).

Despite these many positive initiatives, state financial support for professional development activities was typically weak, and was often the first target of cost-saving measures (also see Massell and Fuhrman, 1994). For instance, budget reductions led the Florida legislature to eliminate funding for summer teacher institutes, and Georgia's Institutes for Learning were reduced from a budget of $3 million to $500,000. Connecticut's Institutes for Teaching and Learning once had a $3 million budget and served 5000 teachers, and included year-round follow up and support activities; by 1994-95, they had a budget of slightly more than $500,000. Over the past few years, Kentucky was the only state in our sample to sustain large increases in dollars earmarked to districts to conduct professional training activities (from $1 per student in 1990-91 to $23 in 1995-96). While Minnesota did not earmark specific dollars to districts for professional development, it had a rule requiring districts to set aside 2.5 percent of their budget for professional development. But this rule was eliminated under pressure from teacher unions and districts who had not seen any increases in their general fund appropriations for several years. In these Minnesota districts, development dollars competed with student programs, salary increases, and other areas for funding.

Thus, many of our states left primary responsibility and decisionmaking about professional development to districts, occasionally intervening in limited ways to control the supply of these activities, or to set incentives for teachers to participate in additional training through licensure and renewal requirements and the salary scale. Connecticut, Kentucky, and South Carolina mandated that districts and/or schools set aside time for staff development. Florida and Connecticut required locals to set up a planning processes to identify professional development objectives. While Florida attempted to connect these local planning processes to statewide goals, policymakers in Connecticut considered eliminating the requirement, arguing that it was little more than a paper exercise that had no positive effect on the design of professional development activities.

Districts and Professional Development

District staff in South Carolina, California, and Connecticut reported that state-aid cutbacks hampered their ability to provide the kind of extensive and long term professional development that research suggests is more effective in changing practice (Porter, 1993; Little, 1993). One-day workshops remained the most frequent way that districts provided support to their teachers. Schools or individual teachers typically select training they want, either from a "menu" produced by the district or an external provider. In contrast to the short-term and idiosyncratic approach to professional development, a few districts offered sabbaticals, supported teacher attendance at professional conferences, involved teachers directly in the development of curriculum and assessment, or supplied other more sustained opportunities for growth. One district in Florida redesigned its professional development strategy to give staff long-term

support in one area of concentration, rather than short-term training on a series of new topics. As the superintendent noted, "Let's not train everybody on everything but longer on a few things. Don't jam anything down their throats—identify certain areas and follow up." We also found districts in Georgia, South Carolina, and Minnesota providing more extended forms of training through the use of summer institutes, customized graduate courses, short-term sabbaticals, and teacher instructional centers.

While a few districts, like one we visited in Connecticut, tried to ensure that their menu of opportunities was tightly aligned to standards initiatives, these offerings often met a diverse set of goals and objectives. Increasingly, schools were being given the responsibility for devising professional development plans and activities for their staff. While this was meant to improve the fidelity of services to school needs and contexts, questions arose about cost-efficiencies and whether the broader needs of the district were being met under these more decentralized arrangements. As one district administrator in Minnesota noted, "Staff development funds are up for grabs—schools can do whatever they want; teachers can do whatever they want."

Since dollars were limited, several districts relied on turnkey training strategies in which one or two teachers were trained and then expected to share their new knowledge with others in the schools. In rural areas, turnkey training was often the only economical way to effectively train large numbers of staff in new pedagogy. As a result, more teachers were training teachers and taking ownership for their professional development. Other districts became more creative in using dollars from local, state, federal, and private sources. For instance, in several districts, federal dollars from Title II (Eisenhower), Title 1, Vocational Education, or Special Education legislation were used in conjunction with local or state dollars to support the training of teachers in special topics, such as inclusion (in Minnesota), higher-order thinking skills (in Georgia), or TechPrep (in Florida). One Florida district even established a public education fund with business and private contributions to support professional development. The district also encouraged schools to join national reform efforts to support additional staff training.

As noted in the section on standards, a number of district officials believed that the reform agenda posed challenges that exceeded their resources and capacities. They found that these initiatives, over the long run, excessively taxed teachers and exceeded their time or expertise for curriculum development. For example, teachers in one Georgia district who were asked to be curriculum writers argued that they could not fulfill that function—that they were neither trained for nor had the time to do it. As a result, the district had to put the reforms on hold. Similarly, staff in Florida and Kentucky talked about the need for more in-depth and on-going training for participants in site-based management. These problems suggest that capacity issues are critical to address when decentralization and/or standards-based reforms are pursued.

Conclusion

By 1994-95, policymakers had taken a number of positive steps to improve teacher certification and professional development activities, and attempted to link them to larger

instructional reform initiatives. But, many professional development efforts were largely piecemeal and procedural, in part because of fluctuating financial commitments from state policymakers. In districts, staff development often focused on the individual as the unit of change, in contrast to what a great deal of research recommends: that individuals need larger networks to support their efforts to effect changes in practice. Thus the criticisms of professional development in recent years—that it has been fragmented, episodic, and loosely related to overall systemic improvements—remains too frequently applicable (Porter et al., 1993; Porter, 1993; Little, 1993). Similarly, we found only a few efforts to conceptualize the training that central office administrators would need to carry out new mandates. In sum, while there have been many exemplary and positive developments in the area of professional development, in most of our states comprehensive change and widespread teacher involvement was modest.

Equity

One of the strong, motivating assumptions behind curricular and instructional reform in recent decades has been that ***all*** students should have the opportunity to study more rigorous academic content. Even prior to the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, reformers argued that public education offered a poor academic diet to the vast majority of American students and that all students could learn more challenging content if given the chance. The current standards-based reform movement continues to make this central claim, although it relies on different and more comprehensive policies for enacting change (see Smith and O'Day, 1991; O'Day and Smith, 1993). This argument derives from a chain of studies finding that, over time, students in the U.S. have undertaken less rigorous academically-oriented curricula, that teachers hold lower academic expectations for poor and disadvantaged students, and that in fact these students could do better if expectations for their performance were higher (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Mirel and Angus, 1994; Porter et al., 1993; Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Dorr-Bremme, 1990; Levine and Lezotte, 1990).

By focusing on raising academic expectations for all students, standards-based reforms interweave equity with academic excellence policies. This effort stands in contrast to many earlier U.S. policies, which often pursued one or the other independently. Indeed, sociologists and historians have often described equity and excellence as opposite and competing values in American education policy. For example, many of the large-scale curriculum reform projects sponsored by the National Science Foundation between the 1950s and 1970s sought to create highly challenging and competitive curricula for a select, elite group of students. At the same time, desegregation and school finance policies were being undertaken as distinct and separate initiatives; when equity efforts did target curriculum, it was usually as an add-on, pull-out program focused on compensatory education. But merging equity and excellence has become a tenet of recent reforms and has been consciously integrated into some state and federal legislation. For example, the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (now, the Improving America's Schools Act)—since 1965 the cornerstone of federal efforts to improve education for poor, minority, and disadvantaged students—requires states to hold disadvantaged Title 1 students to academic standards as high as those held for all others. State courts hearing school finance cases in Kentucky and elsewhere have begun to embrace more specific notions of educational opportunity that include quality core curricula.

Nevertheless, our research over the last few years has suggested that, for the most part, state policymakers have not given sustained attention to equity issues within the context of standards reforms, nor have they carefully thought about the ways in which all children could achieve new, high standards (Fuhrman and Massell, 1992; Massell and Fuhrman, 1994; Fuhrman, 1994b). In this round of fieldwork, we continued to ask questions about whether and

how policymakers were planning for, and trying to promote, learning for all students—including the poor limited English proficient, or disabled—in standards-based policy initiatives.[13]

Equity and Standards-Based Reforms

Policymakers have taken several different approaches to providing all students with the opportunity to meet higher standards, ranging from regulations requiring that every student be tested with the same examinations to training for both regular and special educators on instructional strategies that can help diverse student populations meet new standards. Our review of the states suggests that, while many different ways of addressing equity in standards reforms have arisen, they are only used intermittently. Furthermore, many elements of the implementation of standards for special needs students have not yet been addressed or, if they have been considered, are not well-developed. These issues were left to districts and schools, whose staff in general were more focused on how to make the standards work for all students.

Standards for All

One strategy for incorporating equity in standards reforms was to try to make the academic standards themselves inclusive and reflective of the needs of diverse populations. One common way of doing so was to include representatives of special needs communities in the process of standards development. In general, the process of developing standards consisted of at least three stages: (1) identifying goals or standards; (2) drafting documents; and (3) reviewing and providing feedback on drafts (Massell, 1994a). In most of our states, special educators said they were only infrequently involved in the direct creation of content standards or frameworks, and participated primarily in the latter stages of review and feedback—a situation which left them in a reactive rather than proactive mode vis-à-vis the standards. In Texas, respondents reported that special educators generally were not at all involved in standard-setting and assessment policy development at the state level. Higher levels of involvement in the process were obstructed by perceptions that special education constituted a separately functioning bureaucracy. In addition, special educators were sometimes viewed as not possessing a sufficiently high level of disciplinary knowledge to construct subject-matter standards, since many obtain credentials focused on the particular category of need (blindness, for example).

These processes were handled differently at the district level. District staff frequently noted that personnel from all special needs programs were actively involved in local standards development. Many districts were already moving to include more special needs students in regular programs using inclusion models and Title 1 schoolwide projects. As a consequence, there was a heightened sense that it was critical for representatives of special needs students to be part of curriculum and academic standards development.

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[13] In this study, we examined the process of establishing standards. Other studies are investigating the extent to which standards documents are sensitive to and inclusive of students with special needs.

The use of common standards for all students raises several important questions, not the least of which is how standards should be set for and applied to special needs students. Should different or supplemental standards be generated for special needs students, such as broader life skills standards for students with severe cognitive disabilities (Goertz and Friedman, 1996)? Are the underlying pedagogical assumptions appropriate for all categories of special needs students? Many standards directly or indirectly support more constructivist learning theories. However, based on research, special education practices often strongly emphasize behaviorist approaches to instruction, and many special educators think that the new pedagogical theories are inappropriate for their student populations. More data and evidence needs to be collected to evaluate the proposition that new instructional practices are effective for all students, expanding on studies which support the use of such practices for poor and disadvantaged children. (Shields et al., 1995).

Testing for All

Common testing for all students is another well-recognized strategy to ensure that students are held to the same standards and learn the same curriculum, and it is an approach reinforced by the new federal Title 1 legislation. Several of our states moved quickly to implement this approach, including Kentucky and California (under its previous CLAS test). These states passed uniform assessment policies requiring all students to take their statewide exams. All of the nine states allowed for some exemptions from the test for various categories of need (e.g., very limited English language ability and students with active Individual Education Plans). While Kentucky allowed exemptions for non-English speakers who have been in the U.S. for less than two years, it had very extensive requirements that everyone else be tested and that their scores be included in the accountability program and reporting system. For example, the state required that special needs students be tested with adaptations consistent with the normal delivery of instruction (and not adaptations solely for the purposes of the test). Students with severe disabilities who cannot function within the regular curriculum were to participate in "alternative portfolio" assessments, but their scores would still be included in the accountability program (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). Similarly, California took several steps to include all students in its assessment program by creating, for instance, Spanish-language CLAS tests. New Jersey planned to include special education students in their new fourth-grade test, noting the high level of exemptions in the state's high-stakes graduation test.

Yet, while some states were moving towards greater inclusion of all students in their assessment programs, the strategy still raises many issues that have delayed decisive action in others. One question is whether the identical test is truly appropriate for all students. Should the same test given to regular students be given to students with severe cognitive or emotional disabilities? Would this requirement be fair or even educationally appropriate (Goertz and Friedman, 1996)? For example, it may be more appropriate to test some students with special needs toward the end of their school careers, giving them more time to meet goals rather than at each grade or level. Also, supplementary goals, such as life skills, may be pertinent to assess for these student populations. This issue raises a parallel question about the technical validity of the assessments. For tests to be valid measures, they must reflect students' knowledge and skills, not their ability to take the test (e.g., their physical ability to read or to respond within a specified

amount of time). That is why state regulations allow special needs students to be excluded from mandated tests. If these students are now going to be included, it is essential that the tests be validated for all students, including those with special needs (Goertz and Friedman, 1996).

Assessing all students raises other issues of political and, ultimately, educational consequence. Certainly, the political pressures on state and district policymakers are acute when test results are poor. District and school administrators often worry that including the scores of special needs students in reported results will depress their scores and public support. Indeed the available evidence in our states and districts suggests that achievement gaps persist among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups and across districts, particularly when new tests are introduced.[14] In Kentucky and Connecticut, where results were reported by socioeconomic levels, there was no appreciable closing of the performance gap on new, more demanding state tests. While in Texas the achievement differential between white and minority students was reduced when socioeconomic background was held constant, performance gaps remained.

For these and other reasons, many district and school administrators often favored lenient exclusion rules or pressed for reporting formats that show their efforts in a more favorable light. In some instances, the answer was to disaggregate the results[15], while in others it was to suppress differences across categories. After complaints from urban districts with low test scores, for example, one of our states discontinued public reports with racial and ethnic profiles.

Opportunity-to-Learn Standards

One of the central concerns about the imposition of more challenging standards on special needs students has been whether all schools and classrooms truly have the resources needed to achieve the designated standards. Are schools in urban Connecticut or Minnesota able to provide their students with the same kind of enriched materials, trained personnel, and support services as schools in wealthy suburban areas? If not, is it valid to compare their students' performances on assessments that in essence require students to learn in a more advantaged environment? For example, it would be unfair to assess the laboratory skills of a student who has spent a year conducting experiments with one who is in a school with no lab equipment at all.

Policymakers have discussed setting opportunity-to-learn standards to gauge the various learning opportunities to which students have access. But such standards were the subject of a much heated debate and controversy in Congress during the long struggle to pass Goals 2000. Proposed by Democrats as a way to ensure that students had the chance to achieve high academic

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[14] In states such as Georgia and South Carolina, where basic skills tests had been in place for several years, student passing rates had improved.

[15] The fact that some districts have very transient student populations, including students who have only been attending their schools for a short period of time, would cause the inaccurate assessment of their programs' effectiveness. To address this issue, some states and districts only reported the scores of students who entered a school prior to October 28, while others reported new students' scores separately.

standards, the measure was sharply opposed as unwarranted federal intrusion in state and local affairs. In addition to debates about what the standards might be, concerns were raised that these kinds of standards might become the framework for a round of court battles that would require the infusion of large sums of new money into schools. Given the controversies that occurred at the federal level, it was not surprising to find that in most of our states, as in most of the nation (see CCSSO, 1995), opportunity-to-learn standards were not on the policy agenda. South Carolina and Georgia saw opportunity-to-learn concerns as a states' rights issue and refused to address them in their Goals 2000 plan to the federal government. California's governor even refused to apply for Goals 2000 funds. In New Jersey, by contrast, the new state leadership openly embraced opportunity-to-learn standards as part of a strategic plan to improve education and address equity.

Desegregation, School Finance, and Standards

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling in the 1950s, courts have pursued various strategies to desegregate schools, programs, and personnel and to reduce the racial isolation of minority students. By 1995, many urban districts around the country were being released from court-ordered desegregation remedies (e.g., Denver, Buffalo, and Wilmington), and experts were predicting that in ten years relatively few districts would remain under court desegregation orders (Schmidt, 1995). However, in several of our states, desegregation was still a major issue being pursued not only by the courts but also by other arms of state government. It has remained an ongoing concern for some New Jersey districts, has been a major front-burner issue in Connecticut since the late 1980s, and is now being pursued in the Minnesota courts. For the most part, we found that none of these desegregation efforts were directly linked to standards-based reform initiatives—with the exception of the use of standards-based state assessments in court arguments as gauges of school effectiveness.

In Connecticut and Minnesota, the litigants' approach has been to argue that the state has a responsibility to pursue an active role in desegregating minority-majority urban centers and their largely white suburbs. In Connecticut, the lawyers' proof of harm came directly from the state's standardized tests, on which Hartford students repeatedly ranked last and whose scores continued to fall. While Minnesota's court efforts have just begun, Connecticut plaintiffs were unsuccessful in the *Sheff v. O'Neill* case until recently.[16] In 1995, the state superior court judge cited a 1972 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Spencer v. Kugler*) that "racially balanced municipalities are beyond the pale of either judicial or legislative intervention." He ruled that the Connecticut constitution did not obligate the state to remedy school segregation that it did not cause and refused to consider the fact that Hartford schools are so overwhelmingly poor and minority that they are depriving students of equal educational opportunity. However, the state Supreme Court later overturned this decision.

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[16] A similar suit in Alabama was successful in the courts.

The threat of court action stimulated both Connecticut and Minnesota to attempt to remedy some of the problems through legislative and bureaucratic avenues. Fears of regional bussing led the Connecticut legislature to pass the 1994 Quality and Diversity Act, asking local communities to devise their own voluntary desegregation efforts that would be supported by $11.4 million of state aid during the first year.[17] Again, no regulations explicitly called for standard-setting in these plans. Although magnet schools have been frequently used as a voluntary remedy for segregation, concern over their effectiveness led to a new 1995 law requiring the commissioner to consider whether a proposed magnet is likely to increase student performance on mastery exams, as well as enhance student diversity and awareness of diversity. The Connecticut State Department of Education also established a separate office to work especially with urban and priority school districts. Similarly, in Minnesota the 1994 legislature established a desegregation office in the state department and appropriated $1.5 million to facilitate inter-district desegregation.

Over the last several decades, traditional school finance cases have focused on reducing wealth-based disparities in education spending. But over the past seven years, several state courts have demonstrated an increased willingness to look at issues of educational adequacy as well. In one of our research states, Kentucky, as well as in Alabama and Massachusetts, the courts defined states' obligations in terms of broad curricular goals and outcomes, thus tying school finance to standards-based reform (Goertz and Friedman, 1996).

Market-Based Reforms

As noted earlier in this report, our study states proposed numerous market-based reform measures. In several cases, the arguments used for these reforms revolved around assisting poor and minority students and students in low-performing schools. Advocates argued that schools would be more responsive to the needs of poor or in other ways disadvantaged students if the system operated more as a marketplace than a public monopoly. The argument is if these populations had the opportunity to "vote with their feet," then the system would try harder to meet their needs.

In some cases, market initiatives were triggered if schools did not meet the standards measured by state assessments. Texas now allows students to transfer out of an assigned school if the school is low-performing or if 50 percent or more of its students failed the statewide TAAS tests for the preceding three years. Districts receiving these students get additional state and local funds. Similarly, Kentucky allows students to transfer to another school if performance drops by 5 percent or more. Florida proposed (but did not pass) a choice bill that would have permitted parents to transfer their children out of low-achieving schools. New Jersey's governor proposed a voucher initiative that, if it had passed, would have allowed students in one large urban district to transfer to private schools, given the long history of the public schools' low academic

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[17] Stringent requirements for local passage of the regional plans led to the defeat of 8 out of 11 of them, despite the fact that more than 80 percent of the school boards and half the town governments had backed them. Many minority advocates remained skeptical of the worth of these efforts at reducing racial isolation.

performance. But states did not always directly tie their market-reform measures to targeted groups or to academic standards issues. Minnesota's choice options were universal, and Texas also passed measures that would allow choice for the broader population. Texas' new district charter requirements permit choice within public schools in or outside a district if the locally-adopted charter calls for it.

On the other side of the debate about the effect of market-based initiatives on poor and disadvantaged students are those who believe they would contribute to greater segregation and discrimination, with schools coalescing more tightly around race and class. Would the better schools be able to accommodate the students asking for access? Would the abandoned schools further decline? Would more affluent students take greatest advantage of the choice options, leaving public and/or poorly functioning schools to the most dispossessed segments of society? Minority and union opposition to Florida's choice bill arose from the latter concern. However, in Minnesota, studies suggest that special needs students were participating in the choice options; in fact, about 26 percent of the high school students taking advantage of the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options law to attend Minnesota's technical colleges have special needs, including learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, or physical or visual handicaps (Nathan and Ysseldyke, 1994). But while special needs students have taken advantage of the opportunity, it is not clear what impact the laws have had on the composition of students across schools. Answers to these questions about impact require extensive research after the new policies have been in place for some time.

In sum, while it was certainly true that efforts targeting the educational opportunity of poor and disadvantaged students continued to be made, the initiatives were not high-profile and did not appear to be comprehensive or thoroughly integrated into standards initiatives, particularly those at the state level.

Fiscal Climate

As states try to reform their systems of education, they face numerous fiscal challenges. Though economic forecasts predict steady but slow growth in the economy, school enrollments continue to increase, as do the concentrations of students with special needs—particularly poor students and students with limited English proficiency, and learning or physical disabilities. Concurrently, staff salaries rise along with costs for materials, transportation, and other items. Even with school revenue growing annually, inflation-adjusted revenue per pupil has remained unchanged since 1991 (Odden, Monk, Nakib, and Picus, 1995). More importantly, funding for elementary and secondary education has been faced with increasingly stiff competition in state budgets from Medicaid and corrections (National Governors' Association and National Association of State Budget Officers, 1995, Gold, 1995)—a trend that will likely continue as the federal government reduces support and expands the responsibilities it devolves to states. The result has been a slight reduction in the state's share of education revenues, with a push to rely on local communities for dollars to support the increasing costs of education.

The anti-tax sentiment sweeping the country had reached all of the states in our sample and resulted in considerable policy discussion about containing and even reducing the costs of education. However, in each of our states, education appropriations grew in 1994-95 and were projected to grow in 1995-96—although, again, in constant dollars (adjusted for inflation) there was a general decline. We found state fiscal actions were directed primarily at shifting financial resources from administration to instruction or technology, consolidating program categories, proposing block funding, revising special education formulas, and reducing state departments of education. For the most part, cost containment, redistribution, and reallocation strategies were the primary focus, with little attention or consideration given to retargeting and restructuring resources toward reform goals or to increasing the productivity of schools. In addition, the struggle over equalization continued with new court cases, and funding formulas to satisfy court rules emerged in several of our states.

Among the states in our sample, FY 1995 appropriations for K-12 education accounted for between 19 (in Connecticut) and 47 percent (in Kentucky) of a state's budget (see Table 5). Nationally, the average was 30 percent (Gold, 1995). All nine states were able to increase their appropriation for education in FY 1996. For most, this meant a slight increase or decrease of between 1 and 2 percent in education's share of overall state appropriations, although in Texas it grew 7 percent.

Despite the fact that the proportion of total state appropriations for education remained fairly stable in our sample, after nearly a half-century of growth, states' responsibility for the total costs of schooling declined as local communities assumed a greater share of educational expenditures (see Table 6). Based on data from 1990 to 1992 (1994-95 data were not available), in six of our states, local communities expanded their role in this area. In the next section, "Cutbacks and Efficiency Measures," we discuss how our states and districts responded to these changes.

Table 5
FY 1995 and FY 1996 General Fund Appropriations for K-12 Education (Total and Percentage of General Appropriations*)

State	FY1995 State Appropriation (in millions)			FY1996 State Appropriations (in millions)		
	General	K-12	Percentage	General	K-12	Percentage
CA	40,941	12,178	32	43,421	14,759	34
CT	8,263	1,566	19	8,837	1,622	18
FL	14,292	5,175	36	14,788	5,664	38
GA	9,785	3,361	34	10,701	3,644	34
KY	4,976	2,351	47	5,262	2,671	51
MN	8,596	2,743	32	8,912	2,750	31
NJ	15,281	4,396	29	16,003	4,751	30
SC	4,079	1,246	31	4,359	1,283	29
TX	19,522	6,110	31	21,615	8,144	38

Source: *Eckl et al, 1994 and Snell et al., 1995*

* Excludes funds earmarked for education

Table 6
Percent of Revenue Sources Supporting Public Elementary and Secondary Education, 1990-91 to 1992-93

State	School Year 1990-91				School Year 1992-93			
	Local	State	Federal	Private	Local	State	Federal	Private
CA	25.6	66.0	7.2	1.2	28.6	62.2	8.0	1.2
CT	55.6	41.2	2.9	<1	54.9	38.9	3.5	2.8
FL	39.3	50.1	6.6	4.1	39.1	48.5	8.3	4.1
GA	38.8	52.7	6.5	2.0	39.9	50.4	7.7	2.0
KY	21.4	66.9	9.5	2.1	22.1	67.0	10.1	0.8
MN	36.9	55.3	4.2	3.6	43.2	48.1	4.8	3.8
NJ	57.0	37.8	4.0	1.2	52.1	41.1	4.2	2.3
SC	37.6	50.0	8.5	3.9	39.2	47.0	9.3	4.4
TX	46.6	43.9	6.6	2.9	49.6	40.0	7.5	2.9

Source: *U.S. Department of Education*, 1994 and 1995(a)

Cutbacks and Efficiency Measures

All of our states, except California, were seeking to cut or contain educational expenditures and/or costs. Even states with healthy economies such as Florida and Georgia, were planning to reduce education budgets. For instance, in 1994 the Florida legislature restricted the growth of state funding in education and proposed allowing local communities to establish a half-penny sales tax for school expenditures. Over half of our states (GA, NJ, SC, TX, and FL) tried to restrict local expenditures for administration, although research suggests that districts, on average, spend only between 9 and 11 percent of their dollars on this function: 3 percent on central office and 6 percent on school site expenditures (Odden et al., 1995). Similarly, New Jersey, Georgia, South Carolina, and Texas also reduced state education budgets and/or the size of their central state and local bureaucracies, continuing a trend that CPRE has noted for the past ten years (see Fuhrman and Massell, 1992).

Other states tried to increase the cost-effectiveness of their systems. For instance, Texas attempted to make its regional service centers more effective and efficient by transferring Title 1 technical assistance services to the centers, revising the funding approach, and allowing districts to choose services from any center as a way to spur competition and improve quality and efficiency. South Carolina proposed, but had not yet passed, block grants in an effort to improve efficiency, and states like Florida and Connecticut restructured funding for special education and Gifted and Talented programs (in Florida only) to contain the costs of fast-growing programs. A state-by-state synopsis of fiscal activities used to contain, reduce, or reallocate funds this past year is presented in Table 7, along with one-time funding appropriations.

In response to dwindling resources, districts were also trying to cut the cost of special education. For instance, in Texas, a school site committee elected not to mainstream a special education student because of the cost of adding personnel in the regular classroom. In fact, in districts across all our states, respondents perceived that the cost of serving students with disabilities had taken limited resources away from all students to support a few.[18] More importantly, even with the complaints of costs for special education, most officials were also quick to note that these targeted programs were necessary to ensure that students received services. "Without the dollars these kids would be treated like dogs," stated one local board member. Interestingly, as districts faced fiscal challenges to accommodate dwindling state dollars, very few were thinking about how to restructure and reallocate their resources toward attaining intended reform goals. For the most part, districts responded to state reductions by reducing staff or services.

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[18] However, we did not attempt to document evidence that special education had encroached on regular education.

Table 7
1994-95 Fiscal Activity in CPRE States:
Cost Containment, Reduction, Redistribution, and One-Time Funding

State	Measure
CA	1. Increases in district funding to cover the COLA and growth in enrollment. Allocated on a per-ADA basis, regardless of categorical programs or student poverty. 2. Funding formula no longer favors metropolitan districts. 3. A one-time allocation of $75 per pupil from the CTA-Gould Proposition 98 settlement may be used for non-reocurring expenses.
CT	1. New formula for Special Education to contain cost. 2. New formula for establishing maximum state aid and local contribution. 3. Reductions in state-led activities, such as the beginning teacher certification process (BEST); reduction in regional education service centers.
FL	1. A 1994 tax cap limits budget growth, and a local option half-penny sales tax proposed for local support for education. 2. A 1995 cap (30 percent above state average) on special education for the gifted and talented, emotionally handicapped, and learning disabled. 3. Lowered FTE appropriation for at-risk populations (dropouts, LEP) to cut costs and because many funds went unused in the past. 4. Summer school funds cut 15 percent. 5. Increase in transportation fund, with incentives for efficiency. 6. The 1995 legislature capped district administrative costs.
GA	1. State administration cut by $2.2 million. 2. Allocations to districts for achievement grants will be discontinued in FY 96. 3. District administration funds reduced.
KY	1. Continued adjustments in the funding formula and increases in SEEK funds to offset disparity between districts.
MN	1. Discussion of school-based financing, but policy not authorized. 2. Continued large allocations to support graduation requirements. 3. Funding was a major political issue since most districts had not received an increase in four years.
NJ	1. Restricted administrative expenditures to encourage district consolidation. 2. State legislature froze 1994-95 funding. 3. New school funding formula under development to satisfy court ruling.
SC	1. Proposed consolidation of categorical funds for school improvement with foundation aid. 2. Funding for school councils was discontinued and reallocated to foundation aid.
TX	1. Reallocated unused fourth-quarter federal dollars from local schools to regional service centers. 2. Relocated central office services (Title 1) to centers. 3. Reduced SEA administration and district administration expenditures. 4. Permitted intermediate education service units to compete for statewide for district dollars. 5. Allocated dollars for facilities, but sum is projected to be below what is needed. 6. Basic allocation plans for 1996-97 will support assumed diseconomies in small- and middle-sized school districts.

Fiscal Equity

Since fiscal equity among districts has not improved in several years (Odden and Clune, 1995), it was not surprising to find most of our states still struggling with fiscal equity and adequacy issues. All of the nine states in our study had been involved in school finance litigation at one time or another during the past five years. While the long-running Texas school finance case was resolved, other suits were just beginning or were continuing.

New Jersey was once again redesigning its funding formula due to a court ruling that the Quality Education Act of 1990 did not correct funding disparities as intended. While the department of education was developing a new formula that would target state funding for a base program, the legislature must still address the court's mandate to equalize spending between the state's poor urban and wealthy suburban districts. Either approach will most likely raise local taxes in wealthy communities. In South Carolina, 42 districts were suing the state over inadequate education funding. This case has been in litigation for over five years and as of late 1995 had not yet been decided. However, the state superintendent was confident that if the legislature accepted the systemic reform package, adequacy criteria would be met and the lawsuit would be rescinded. Even in Florida, where funding has been equalized, a coalition of school districts, the state board of education, and the school superintendent's state association are suing the legislature and governor for inadequate funding due to the rising enrollment of special needs students, the cost of mandated improvement and accountability, and under-funded transportation services. Overall, about half the states in our sample were facing litigation over equalization.

To the relief of policymakers, in 1995 the Texas court ruled the 1993 school finance solution constitutional. This formula has two tiers: a foundation program and a guaranteed yield program, along with program and district weights to narrow disparities. High-wealth districts must reduce their wealth to a level at or below $280,000 per weighted student. Since the 1993 bill did not include a facilities component, new legislation proposed a formula that will equalize a program for facilities based upon district wealth, project cost, and tax rate. At the time of our research, the bill carried a $170 million appropriation, but the Texas School Alliance estimated needs at $8 billion.

As with the inequities that have emerged or may emerge from cost-cutting measures, several states' finance formulas may tilt resources to districts with fewer concentrations of special needs students. California and Connecticut proposed funding formulas that potentially provide fewer resources to their large metropolitan districts. In Florida, funding for summer school programs and other projects were reduced, and this may erode resources in urban areas.

In Closing

As this report strongly demonstrates, standards-based reform remained a key component of policy agendas in 1994-95. Indeed, policymakers on both sides of the political aisle and across all levels of government—federal, state, and local—broadly agreed on the merits and worth of this approach to school change, which persisted despite substantial turnovers in leadership, criticisms about the content of particular standards and assessment policies, and real cuts in educational spending. Policymakers blunted criticism, and overcame technical issues, by adopting more mixed reform models—models that balanced between newer and more traditional approaches to content, assessment, and instruction. This balance also allowed them to proceed, and incremental progress was made in standards, assessments, professional development, and other aspects of reform.

But policymakers must confront several immediate issues and challenges if they are to improve these reforms. One which came through repeatedly in our field work is the need to provide additional, and more sustained support to teachers. Standards reforms ask teachers to move beyond the *status quo* of teacher-talk and drill-and-practice activities, to know their subjects in greater depth, and to help all students master more challenging material. Teachers need access to richer opportunities on an on-going basis, and they need direction and support from central office staff. But policymakers in recent years have ignored the role of the district administrators and local boards, frequently conceiving of them as impediments to be bypassed rather than partners in the change effort. Yet these administrators are often pivotal conduits for reform, interpreting its substantive and providing—or not providing, as the case may be—both organizational structures and resources that effect whether and how they are translated into school and classroom practices (see Spillane et al., 1995). Complicating their role is the decentralization occurring via site-based management and decisionmaking. One of the lessons of recent reforms is that it is not desirable to either teachers or administrators to completely recreate the wheel of curriculum or assessment. This begs rethinking the question of the districts' role in reform. What can districts do to facilitate exchanges, provide support, and fight the insularity that often plagues schools and teachers?

Second, as we have seen, equity strategies were often not well thought out, particularly in regards to the standards' reforms. If the goal of achieving higher standards for all students is not to be hollow rhetoric, resources and attention must focus on to how best to serve all students in a challenging academic environment. Equally important is addressing the problems that impinge on students' abilities to meet the academic goals, and that teachers and administrators in actuality cope with every day—students who are poor, hungry, homeless, in violent neighborhoods or families, coping with drug dependencies, and more. These problems are growing greater, and are crowding out teachers', administrators' and students' capacity to attend to the very difficult educational tasks at hand.

Third, as noted in the preceding pages of this report, by 1994-95 the content of the reforms themselves had moved towards the middle of the change spectrum, with policymakers trying to balance between those forces calling for far-reaching and radical innovation with those

forces calling for adherence to traditional practices. This more moderate stance may help the standards move forward politically. But questions remain about whether such balancing advances the instructional goals of reform, i.e., rigorous, demanding curricula that stimulates students' abilities to think critically and to problem-solve. Will standards policies that explicitly incorporate both new and old goals make sense in the classroom? Will they send mixed signals, and simply reinforce the *status quo* of past, unsuccessful practices?

Fourth, the commitment of nongovernmental and national change agents to the standards-based reform agenda has been remarkable and sustaining. Together these groups set in motion a dense array of professional networks that, if well-coordinated and conceived, could connect and provide important support to teachers and school administrators. But we also found that they could add an additional layer of complexity on the system, and send local educators in diverse and sometimes competing directions. Policymakers at the state and local level should seek ways to bring these various activities into concentrated focus.

Finally, state and district policymakers must learn not only how to listen to their publics but also how to teach them about reform efforts. In the end, such accomplishments require well-articulated messages and long-term efforts.

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APPENDIX 1
CPRE STATE RESPONDENTS

Location	Respondent(s)
STATE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION	Superintendent and/or Deputy Superintendent
	Curriculum Specialist
	Assessment Specialists
	Teacher Policy Specialist(s) in Certification, Professional Development
	Special Education Director
	Budget Director
	Legislative Liaison
	Other as Appropriate
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	President or Executive Director
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE	Governor's Education Aide
LEGISLATURE	Education and Appropriation Committee Chairs and staff
ASSOCIATIONS	Teachers' Union
	Major Interest Group Representatives
COMMUNITY MEMBERS	Business Representative
	Education Journalist

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CPRE LOCAL RESPONDENTS

Location	Respondent(s)
CENTRAL DISTRICT OFFICE	Superintendent
	Curriculum Specialist
	Assessment Specialist
	Teacher Policy Specialist(s) in Certification and Professional Development
	Chief Business Officer
	Other
SCHOOL SITE PERSONNEL	Principal
	Teacher
ASSOCIATIONS	Teacher Union Representative
COMMUNITY MEMBERS	Business Representative
	Parent Representative
	Education Journalist

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